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EXCURSIONS IN THE ABRUZZI.

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EXCURSIONS

IN

THE ABRUZZI

AND

NORTHERN PROVINCES OF NAPLES.

BY THE HON. KEPPEL CRAVEN,

AUTHOR OF

"A TOUR THROUGH SOUTHERN NAPLES."

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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EXCURSIONS

IN

THE ABRUZZI.

CHAPTER I.

Set out for Caserta.— Royal Palace of Sto. Leucio.—The Voltorno. — Roman Remains. — Calatia.—Piedimonte.— Gaetano Family.—Villages of Castello and S. Gregorio.— Lake of the Matise. — Town of Alife.— Manufactures of Piedimonte.— Village of St. Angelo.—La Pietra.

THERE is perhaps no occupation which, in the maturer, not to call them declining, days of human existence, so entirely carries back the mind to the sensations and enjoyments of an earlier period, as the act of exploring for the first time a beautiful and interesting tract of country. Whether the succession of picturesque and varied landscapes which arrests a traveller's attention assumes the vague but brilliant tints that colour the yet untrodden paths

of life, or whether the investigation of new regions is pursued with the same eager security which marks the more adventurous pursuits of youth, it is not here attempted to determine; but, in the hope that the majority of his readers may in a greater or less degree have experienced the same feeling, the Author trusts they will not consider as exaggerated the pleasurable excitement produced by the opening of his journey, in a ride from Caserta to Cajazzo, during the fresh hours of a spring morning in one of the finest of European climates.

The course I followed was that of the valley extending between the Tifatian mountains circumscribing the plain of Naples behind Capua, and the more distant range which, rising beyond the Voltorno, is known (under the name of *Matese*) as one of the highest among the southern Apennines.

On quitting Caserta, a spot too well known to require description, and where I had passed the preceding night, I skirted the park-wall surrounding the whole of the royal domain: and, after passing under the arch or gallery through which the carriage-road is conducted beneath

the entire breadth of the pleasure-grounds and the stream flowing from the cascade, I soon reached the little palace of Belvedere, better known by the name of S^to^ Leucio, where the luxuries of a royal residence are, singularly enough, blended with the labours of a silk manufactory.

The situation, however, as well as the temperature it enjoys, is infinitely preferable to that of Caserta, and it may rank as the most desirable among the many country-seats possessed by the sovereign of these realms.

The finely-shaped hill rising behind it is entirely covered with a forest of evergreens, and walled round in its whole circumference to preserve from exterior depredation the game of all kinds which it contains.

The road is carried along a steep acclivity, between the park-wall and a deep ravine, through a pass sufficiently tortuous to conceal its course from the plain.

This defile, as wild as it is beautiful, divides the mountains Tifati and Callicola: the former presents a bare and not extensive range, which rises below the valley of Cajazzo, and severs its

western extremity from the plains of Capua and Calvi; the latter consists of an equally limited ridge of hills stretching behind Caserta as far as Madaloni.

The abrupt descent, known by the name of Gradillo, which follows, brings the traveller somewhat unexpectedly to the edge of a plain, or rather vale, of considerable extent; and, shortly after, turning to the right, he reaches the brink of the river Voltorno, which is seen meandering from the foot of the hill on which the town of Cajazzo stands, at the distance of about six miles, through the whole of this flat.

By turning to the left on quitting the defile of S^to^ Leucio, and keeping along the bank of the river, one may go to S^ta^ Maria di Capua by a good carriage-road, which, skirting the base of the Tifatian mountain to the spot where it sinks into the plain, and winding round its roots, leads to that town, the unworthy successor of the far-famed capital of Campania.

The site of the ancient city preserves nevertheless many respectable vestiges of its former splendour, among which the noted Campanian amphitheatre holds a justly distinguished rank.

Another line of communication with the Roman road, and one little known even to the natives, may be found by crossing the Voltorno at a ferry called di Formicola (from a cluster of small villages so named), and joining the track which leads from Cajazzo to the modern Capua along the right bank of the river: this enters the main road about half-a-mile beyond the last-mentioned city, thereby avoiding the necessity of a passage through it.

Some remains of ancient buildings are visible in this district, more particularly two brick arches of a Roman bridge, on the left shore of the stream opposite a ferry; and here, also, are a few houses, scarcely deserving the name of a village, which it nevertheless bears, as Triflisco. This was one of the three bridges mentioned as existing over the Voltorno in Roman times, of which one only, that at the modern Capua, anciently Casilinum, is now extant.

Triflisco consists of several mills, erected along the short course of some sulphureous streams rising at the foot of a rock a few hundred yards from the river itself, which has here forced its way through a very narrow cleft in

the hills, leaving space only for a road on either side.

The clearness and rapidity of these rills, the fine trees that shade them, and the peculiar style of the buildings, combine in giving much picturesque effect to this spot.

A town called Sicopolis, built by the Lombards in honour of one of their princes, but shortly afterwards destroyed by fire, is said to have existed on the site of Triflisco.

But, to return to my own line of progress: The Voltorno is crossed at another ferry, called di Cajazzo, where many excellent springs gushing from the rocks mingle with the water of the river, which, as in the days of Virgil and Horace, rolls a turbid stream in a deep and sandy bed.

Beyond it is a substantial building, now a tavern, but originally erected for the purpose of a royal relay or station, when this road was first planned and made for the sole purpose of opening a convenient communication between Caserta and the numerous chaces or preserves which then existed in the vicinity, both on this and the other side of Cajazzo.

These are no longer in being; but the road has been kept up, and even extended far beyond its original limits, for the use and advantage of several contiguous towns.

The vale of the Voltorno offers more interest to the agriculturist than to the painter; its surface being almost entirely cultivated with wheat and maize, and intersected by deep ditches for the purpose of draining and irrigation. Of trees, or any other vegetation than the above, it is entirely devoid: the northern range of hills that bound the plain is, however, clothed with olives; while the windings of the river, and the very striking position of Cajazzo, give it a particular character and originality of feature.

The ascent to this last place, which is long and somewhat tedious, was shaded by trees of northern growth (among which the thorn and oak predominate), furnished at this season with additional attractions by a multitude of nightingales in full song.

Two towns bearing the appellation of Calatia stand within no very great distance of each other, and they have so frequently been mentioned by ancient authors that they might easily

have been confounded, had not the epithet *transvulturnensis* marked their respective positions with indisputable precision: the site of the other, which stood in Campania, has been recognised by antiquaries at a place called Le Galazze, near Madaloni; while this city, which ranked higher in size and importance, belonged to one of the divisions of the Samnite domains.

Some interesting remains of its former grandeur still exist in the line of polygonal walls easily to be traced in unequal degrees of preservation round the whole circuit of the modern town, which, with its adjacent Casali, boasts of about five thousand inhabitants.

The interior offers little that is remarkable in its more recent constructions; but several inscriptions are collected in the market-place, and it moreover contains an antique structure worth notice, in the form of a large subterranean cistern, divided in two portions, which to this day furnishes the natives with the only supply of water they possess.

When at the close of every autumnal season this reservoir is cleaned out, the names of the duumviri who repaired it, and furnished its

apertures with the marble parapets that still surround them, become visible on the tablet on which they are inscribed below the ordinary level of the water.

From each front of the baronial castle, which, as was customary in feudal times, occupies the highest position in the town, and belongs to the Florentine family of Corsi, an extensive and beautiful view of the surrounding country is enjoyed.

Two of these, in a diametrically opposite direction to each other, display the devious windings of the same river; for the Voltorno, always remarkable for the sinuosity of course which, according to some authors, gave it the name it bears, after running in a south-east line from the plain of Venafro to the hills of Cajazzo, takes a sudden sweep all round their base, and then flows nearly due west towards Capua, the cupolas and bastions of which show themselves through the narrow gap that admits the stream from one plain to another.

Looking to the east, the prospect is not less interesting, with the addition of the Calore issuing from the valley of Benevento, where it

has received the Sabato. Its waters are then united to those of the Voltorno, under the finely-shaped and darkly-wooded mountain Taburnus, near the little town of Solipaca; which place, in the distance, together with Limatola, and Sant' Agata de' Goti, form striking features in the picture.

To the north, however, a still more attractive landscape is unfolded, in which the Voltorno continues to hold the foremost station: it runs through a valley of longer extent than that of Cajazzo, embellished by all that gives animation and variety to a rural prospect: bold crags crowned with thick woods, or sinking into softly undulated knolls,—large portions of forest scenery through which villages and ruined towers show themselves in the happiest positions,—green meads, and the richest vegetation gracing the immediate banks of the river,—and, lastly, the snow-capped peaks of Matese rising majestically above the town of Piedimonte,—form a succession of objects over which, when illumined by the peculiar tints of a southern atmosphere, the traveller's eye can long wander with renewed pleasure.

While my horses baited at Cajazzo, I breakfasted on an excellent *costata arrostita*, Anglicè a beef-steak, and a pint of *asprinia*, a very light white wine resembling weak Rhenish; and then resumed my way through a series of scenery stamped with a character as British as that of the dish of which I had eaten. Inclosures of quick hedges, with elms and oaks springing from their verdant lines,—numerous brooks trickling along the road-side, from which narrow green lanes frequently emerged, leading to adjacent villages,—created an illusion which was only destroyed by the appearance of vines trailing over mulberry-trees. The road is almost one continued, but not very steep, descent of about eight miles to the edge of the Voltorno, running under a bank clothed with thickets in which much charcoal is made.

The stream is here as much reduced in breadth as it is improved in colour and transparency; so much so, indeed, as to render the existence of the ferry-boat established at this spot only indispensable in the winter months. The distance of about four miles more, through a comparatively bare, but not unfertile, tract

of land, brings one to Piedimonte, a mile before which a road to the left leads to Alife, the ancient *Alifæ*, situated in a swampy and consequently unhealthy hollow, while the former town, placed on a much higher level on the lower declivities of the Matese, enjoys a more salubrious air.

I had heard so much of the beauty of Piedimonte, that at first, as it usually happens, I was somewhat disappointed; for its aspect, though in some degree striking, was deficient in the general picturesque effect I had anticipated; but a closer investigation of its interior localities convinced me that the sketches they had furnished to artists were not exaggerated.

Piedimonte is a town of no antiquity, and has risen but of late years into importance and population, in consequence of the numerous manufactures of various kinds which an abundant supply of water has afforded the means of establishing. It is composed of two divisions, one of which, from the comparative lowness of its situation, is denominated *La Vallata*; the joint amount of the inhabitants is estimated at ten thousand, whose industrious appearance,

clean and substantial attire, and extremely courteous manner, create on a first impression a strong prepossession in their favour. The streets are wide, though neither regular nor well paved, but they contain many good houses; among which must be ranked as a palace that of the Duke of Laurenzana, formerly the feudal possessor of Piedimonte, and to this day proprietor of its title, together with a large portion of territory within and round the town.

This mansion, in a centrical and elevated, but not very accessible position, is built and laid out very much after the fashion of the Roman villas of the seventeenth century, (the probable date of its construction,) when the prevailing taste was displayed more in the interior ornaments and distribution than in the form of external architecture which is observable in the buildings of an earlier period. Here, large vaulted apartments with appropriate paintings in fresco, opening to a pensile garden commanding a fine view of the plain, and laid out in terraces beautified by orange and lemon trees in *espaliers*, appear to render it peculiarly

adapted for a summer residence, while numerous fountains in the formal, though puerile, style of the age, corroborate that character; but few Neapolitans that can afford it choose that season for a *villegiatura*, preferring, and not unfrequently with reason, the spring and autumn.

There is likewise a theatre attached to this palace, and a hall or gallery of more than ordinary dimensions, which is now used as a vestibule of entrance, and which is filled with a chronological series of all the feudal lords of the Gaetano family ever since the year 800, —the period to which the foundation of their lineage from a Duke of *Gaeta* is referred.

A less remote, but at the same time better authenticated, genealogy may justly be granted to them, as descendants of the family of Pope Boniface VIII, in the very beginning of the fourteenth century, when they undoubtedly were rich and powerful in the vicinity of the city of Anagni: that pontiff's violent and haughty disposition, his altercations with Philip the Fair of France, and, above all, his extraordinary downfall and death, render his cha-

racter one of the most remarkable of that æra; since which, the family, divided into several branches, have held distinguished rank both in the Roman and Neapolitan domains.

The election of the anti-Pope Clement VII, from which originated, in the year 1378, the deplorable schism which afflicted the Roman church for so long a space of time, may be considered as entirely due to the intrigues and influence of a nobleman of this race; Onorato Gaetano received the disaffected cardinals in the town of Fondi, of which he was feudal possessor, and so successfully protected them from all external interference, that they were enabled to proceed to the nomination of the pontiff they meant to oppose to Urban VI, whose violent and overbearing conduct had disgusted the greater portion of the sacred college. The Dukes of Sermoneta, of the same name, are still extensive landed proprietors in the papal states; and it was from this branch that Charles III. purchased the feudal rights and territory of Caserta, which conferred upon it the title of prince.

The present flourishing condition of Piedi-

monte is attributable to the abundance and power of the river Torano, which, rising immediately behind it on a much higher level, is susceptible of being easily subdivided, and conducted through all parts of the town, so as to act on the machinery of a variety of manufactories, and keep them in constant activity.

The source of this stream presents by far the most curious spectacle of which the place can boast. It springs about half a mile from the last habitations of the town, which, placed on either side of a narrow opening in the rocks, gradually become less frequent as the ravine contracts, till at last it only leaves space for the course of the river, and a path which leads to its origin, at the foot of the precipitous mass of rocks which form the substruction of the Matese.

Here the Torano gushes from under a very low natural arch; and after forming a pool of the most limpid purity, surrounding a little island shaded by fine poplars, it dashes away between the lateral rocks overhung with rich vegetation and wild flowers, with all the impetuosity of a true northern stream.

Another and less copious brook, thence called Torano Piccolo, rises about a mile distant, in the lower region, denominated Vallata, and, after likewise giving motion to several wheels, directs a portion of its supplies towards the town of Alife, while the remainder is united with the larger stream, which, thus enriched, is again reduced, divided, and conducted into the subjacent plain for the purposes of irrigation, after which it finally discharges itself into the Voltorno.

The advantages derived from a favourable exposition and climate, thus assisted by the most efficient means of fertilization, render the territory of Piedimonte abundantly productive of every esculent vegetable, mostly excellent in its kind: among these, however, the fruit and wine claim pre-eminence; the latter, particularly, is held in high estimation, being strong-bodied and well-flavoured, but perhaps a little too sweet to please a northern palate.

On one of the hills that overhang the ravine of the Torano, a convent, called S. Pasquale, is placed in a very romantic and sequestered position, a tedious and fatiguing journey to

which is amply compensated by the magnificent prospect which it enjoys.

On the other side, at a less degree of elevation, stands a village, reckoned one of the divisions of the town itself, and distinguished by the name of Castello: through this is conducted the road, or rather path, leading over the Matese into the adjoining province of *Molise*, which is practicable for mules, and much frequented in the summer season, as affording the shortest line of communication with that district, and its capital Campobasso.

I followed this track rather beyond half the distance to the highest peak, which is called Monte Miletto, for the purpose of visiting a lake from which tradition says that the Torano's stream is supplied through subterraneous channels.

Besides the above-mentioned village of Castello, the way lies through another, named S. Gregorio, the aspect and position of which threw a chill over even the temperature of May, notwithstanding some good vineyards that grow beneath it; and the only remarkable object within its precincts is a handsome mansion of

good architecture, recently built by the richest proprietor of the place, who has a large family of daughters grown up, not one of whom had ever gone a quarter of a mile from their birth-place. Beyond this all cultivation ceases, and no symptoms of vegetation are apparent, except a few stunted sloe-bushes, and the puny weeds that grow in the crevices of the rocks; but on reaching a steep ridge, and looking over into the dell which opens beneath, a different scene discloses itself in the prospect of the lake, surrounded by thick forests of beech clothing all the encircling hills.

Though the upper half of the mountain was still covered with the winter snow, which rendered it impassable, the lake had nearly attained its highest level; and in that state I should reckon it to be about two miles in length, and about one and a half in its widest part, with a woody islet in the centre.

It has a broad margin of marshy soil on the north side, which is sown with oats, and a narrower border of pasturage extends all round the shore, literally enamelled, at the period of my visit, with heartsease and anemones.

The extremities of the basin containing the lake join other dells and Alpine valleys, which afford fresh and abundant pasture to the cattle after the month of June; the huts of the shepherds, and the extensive sheds for the animals, were therefore as yet unoccupied; but these wild recesses were occasionally enlivened by the passage of numerous groups of peasants of both sexes, clad in their best attire, returning from the celebration of the jubilee at Monte Casino. The lake of the Matese, like most similar reservoirs in mountainous districts, is supposed to be fathomless in its centre, where native traditions have moreover placed an abyss or whirlpool, through which its waters are said to find their way to the Torano; the fact admits of much discussion, but its probability rests in some measure on the circumstance of the entrance of several streams into the pool, without any visible outlet. Its only produce consists of tench, the right of fishery being shared between the township of Piedimonte and the Duke of Laurenzana, and farmed annually for the very moderate sum of eighty ducats.

The town of Alife is situated about three miles from Piedimonte, nearer the centre of the valley, and the Voltorno, which runs through it. The vicinity of this river, and other streams that surround it in all directions, render the atmosphere so unhealthy during a great portion of the year, as to have reduced it to the lowest state of depopulation and misery: from the rank of a very considerable town, which it held under the Roman empire, and even to a later period of the middle ages, it has fallen to the most abject condition of any among those that still bear the name, and claim the privileges, of a city.

It still covers a considerable extent of ground, being surrounded by its ancient walls, well preserved in many parts: it exhibits, besides these, numerous vestiges of antiquity, such as an amphitheatre, baths, and several portions of large edifices; while votive altars, fragments of sculpture, and a great number of inscriptions, have been discovered at different times, and are still scattered along its untenanted streets.

It is moreover the seat of episcopal dignity, though its occupant, together with most of the

accompanying clergy, resides at Piedimonte, from whence it is easy for them to attend to the discharge of their functions in the cathedral, seminary, and other ecclesiastical establishments, which continue to exist within its circuit. The first time I visited Piedimonte (in 1824), I was most hospitably received by the proprietor of the largest of all the manufactories in the town: this gentleman, a Swiss by birth, has long resided there, and by his industry and perseverance brought his establishment to a scale of perfection which does him great credit; and in consequence of that, and the advantages it confers upon the population at large, he is much respected. It is to be lamented that the difficulty of effecting general and continued sales of the finer articles in cotton and linen, which his ingenuity and capacity fully enable him to produce, limits the result of his labours to objects of a more homely, though as useful, quality.

I have frequently since that period visited this spot, and always with interest and satisfaction; but have merely made it a resting-place between Caserta and the residence of

some friends at a village called St. Angelo, five miles farther to the westward on the prolongation of the roots of the Matese: the road to this place is carried from Alife along the side of those slopes, gradually ascending through an open forest of fine oaks growing above portions of corn-land. This hilly district is less populous than that extending on the left of Piedimonte along the curves of the mountain which accompany those of the Voltorno, and is perhaps less beautiful in its details; but the village of St. Angelo, from its elevated situation at nearly the extremity of the valley, not only commands a much greater expanse of prospect, but reaches into the rich and varied country round the town of Teano, and only terminates with the sea itself, which with the rock of Mondragone, the ancient Mount Massicus, completes the view in the happiest manner.

This village, which the kindness of the above-mentioned friends has induced me to visit several times, contains not more than one thousand inhabitants, and is remarkable for the number of those whose easy circum-

stances enable them to reside there in a state nearly amounting to affluence.

Except this particularity, and its cheerful and healthy position, St. Angelo boasts of nothing worth notice; it is distinguished from the multitude of other places (always in mountainous positions) bearing the same name, by the adjunct of *Raviscanina*, which is that of another village, about a mile farther up the hill to the north-west.

A bad road leads down to a ferry on the Voltorno; and, after crossing it, to the large village of Pietra Vairana, placed on an isolated eminence that appears detached from the mass of the Matese by the river which flows between them.

La Pietra, as it is usually denominated, contains three thousand inhabitants, and, though reputed to suffer from malaria, is a flourishing place; it faces the south, while the smaller village of Vairana, from which it is named, is placed on the reverse of the same hill looking to the north, and the prolongation, in that direction, of the chain of the Matese.

An ancient castle, now in ruins, perched

on the highest peak, commands the two valleys.

Following the same road, which improves considerably after passing La Pietra,* three miles more bring it to a junction with that which leads from the capital into the provinces of Abruzzo, at a tavern called, from a neighbouring village, *di Cajaniello.* As it is not probable that travellers will in general pursue the circuitous route I have described, by Piedimonte, I trust no apology will be necessary for the following account of the country intervening between Capua and this spot, along the course of the post-road; which affords a shorter and more satisfactory mode of communication with either the northern regions, or those of Monte Casino and Sora.

* It is now completed, and establishes a direct and short line of communication between Piedimonte and the great road from the capital to the Abruzzi.

CHAPTER II.

Road from Capua.—Calvi.—Notices of the ancient Town.—Teano and its Antiquities.—Marino Marzano, Duke of Sessa.—San Germano.—Remains and Architecture of the old City.—Varro's Villa.—High Character of the Convent.—The Church.—Abode of St. Benedict.—Decline of the Establishment.

LEAVING Capua by the bridge over the Voltorno and the adjoining fortified gates, and following the high-road, the traveller will find, about three miles farther, that it branches off to the left towards Sparanisi, the next post-station leading to Mola di Gaeta. This track, familiar to most foreigners as that which conducts to Rome, pursues, with little deviation, the same line as the famed Appian way.

If, instead of this route, he keeps that which continues the straight course in a nearly northern direction, his progress will be parallel with

the Via Latina, which joined the Appia at Capua; and after traversing a fertile but not very attractive portion of country, strongly impressed with a volcanic character, he will, near the twenty-third milestone, arrive at the remains of the city of Cales or Calenum, now represented by the few edifices that constitute the modern episcopal town of Calvi.

A cathedral, a seminary, three taverns, and the ruins of a Gothic castle of small dimensions, are the only component parts of the representative of one of the principal cities of Ausonia; which, together with Minturnæ, Vescia, and another, named itself Ausonia, yielded to the victorious sway of the Romans in the year of the republic 419, and was afterwards incorporated in the territory of Campania. It appears to have retained, even after that period, some claims to importance, derived perhaps as much from its natural productions as the remains of its former grandeur.

Horace, who may be considered as a competent judge, refers more than once to the excellence of its wines, which, from the vicinity of the district that produced them to that of the

Falernian, may probably have partaken of the same qualities.

> Cæcùbum et prælo domitam Caleno
> Tu bibes uvam, &c.

While Pliny, with the discrimination of a naturalist, mentions the inebriating nature of an acidulous spring, which is likewise recorded by Vitruvius and Valerius Maximus, and is still supposed to exist near Francolisi on the Roman road.

It was also noted for a manufactory of agricultural implements, and for another of fictile vases, peculiarly favourable to the preservation of wine. It is perhaps not unworthy of remark that some recent excavations in these regions have brought to light a very extensive and varied collection of articles of terra-cotta of good taste and execution, which may serve to corroborate this assertion.

The series of wars and invasions which marked the calamitous times that succeeded the downfall of the Roman empire, degraded Cales to a station from which it seems never to have recovered under its modern denomination, and which is probably due to the insalubrity of the

air. Its see, united to that of the neighbouring Teano, still boasts of a bishop, who resides at the village of Pignataro, two miles distant. The vestiges of antiquity which distinguish it, are, nevertheless, sufficiently numerous to arrest the observation of the traveller: they consist of several masses of brick constructions, faced with opus reticulatum, two of which, from the traces of lateral columns, are supposed to have been temples. The dilapidated remains of an amphitheatre, and those of a theatre in a less deteriorated condition, are also visible; as well as several arches and some sepulchres, which, when opened, have furnished the funereal articles usually found in similar receptacles.

But the most interesting, perhaps I should say the most picturesque object, is a small fountain formed of a marble slab, bearing on its surface a very well executed bas-relief of elegant design, composed of festoons of vine-leaves and grapes with a mask in the centre. This relic, bearing every appearance of originality of position, and supplying the surrounding inhabitants with the only good water to which they have access, is placed against the

base of a steep but not very elevated rock covered with creepers, forming one side of a singular little volcanic glen, bearing in its whole extension the marks of innumerable conduits, or pipes, probably for the purpose of supplying baths, or thermæ. Besides these, many traces of pavement of the Via Latina are apparent; and, near the church, the shafts of granite columns, some marble capitals, and fragments of sculpture and inscriptions, have been collected, attesting the importance and size of the ancient city, which has likewise been illustrated by the discovery of numerous and valuable coins.

The situation of Calvi is such as to render the unwholesomeness of its atmosphere doubly to be deplored; between two well-formed hills at the entrance of one of the most fertile plains in the world, and close to a small but picturesque rivulet, it possesses attractions and advantages of various kinds, all of which are annihilated by that fatal scourge.

Two miles beyond this, a tavern called La Torricella forms the post-station between Capua and Venafra; and a good carriage-road

breaks off to the left, leading in a north-western direction to the town of Teano, placed about three miles from this point of junction, which is looked upon by antiquaries as that which united the respective territories of the Ausonii and Sidicini: if we credit Strabo, it may likewise be considered as the spot where two temples of Fortune were erected, one on either side of the Via Latina, which follows the same line as that leading to Teano. This last place contains in its immediate environs, principally on the eastern side, some considerable ruins, among which those of the Circus and theatre are the most remarkable, and in point of size and preservation much superior to the relics at Calvi.

On the other side of the town, two hundred, or more yards, of the Roman road point out the commencement of that which now conducts to Rocca Monfina, anciently *Aurunca*, through which the Itinerary tables inform us that the Via Latina passed between Teanum and Casinum.

The site of Aurunca, in a very elevated position, to the north of Sessa, the ancient Suessa

Aurunca, claims the investigation of the geologist as well as of the antiquary, being designated by Breislak as the largest and probably the most formidable of the numerous craters that are crowded together in this part of Campania. The ancient Teanum, distinguished, by the addition of Sidicinum, from another town of the same name in Apulia, was the capital, and, indeed, the only city of the Sidicini; a circumstance which, while it speaks favourably of its magnitude and consequence, gives so limited a notion of the national territory to which it belonged, that no surprise is created by the assertion of Livy, that it yielded to the Romans after a single battle,—*uno prælio.*

Strabo observes, that in his days Capua and Teanum were the only places in all Campania that could be considered of any importance. The last boasted, as well as Cales, of an acidulous spring, now identified with one that rises in a beautiful glen about half a mile from the modern town to the left of the road which leads into the main track towards Abruzzo.

This water, now called Acqua delle Cantarelle, is strongly impregnated with fixed air

and a chalybeate taste, by no means unpleasant, and its virtues as a tonic are highly extolled by the natives. It gushes abundantly from the roots of some ancient oaks within a few yards of a wild brook, into which it flows: this rivulet, after running under Teano and receiving a few others, becomes dignified in the plain, as the *Savone*, with the name of river, and there it has been designated by Statius as *piger* or lazy,—an epithet by no means applicable to the earlier period of its course.

It is crossed by the road leading from Torricella to Teano, and again, near Francolisi, by that which conducts from Naples to Rome; after this it finds its way into the plain, and, subdivided into numerous branches, surrounds and intersects the swampy and pestilential district of Mondragone, falling into the Mediterranean just below it, very near the mouth of the Voltorno. The Pons Campanus, which carried the Appian road across its waters, and is cited as one of the stations in the Pentingerian Tables, must have existed not very far from this last-mentioned spot.

To return to Teano: The modern town en-

joys the advantages of a fine situation and an excellent air: it is, like most of those built on an eminence, composed of steep, narrow, and dark streets, which offer nothing attractive or interesting; but a wide causeway or terrace recently constructed, and winding nearly round the whole of its extension, adds great magnificence to its exterior aspect and approach: this, on the south side, is heightened by the addition of some fine houses looking over it behind some extensive orange-gardens; and it affords to the inhabitants, four thousand in number, the convenience of a good carriage-road or drive, conducted judiciously along a gentle slope from the lower extremity and gate to the upper one. Near this last an abundant fountain is placed, the waters of which are afterwards conveyed into the interior, where they supply many others.

The elevation on which Teano stands furnishes it with extensive and agreeable views in every direction.

Towards the south and the Mediterranean the descent is gradual, and most pleasingly diversified by a succession of inequalities of

ground carefully cultivated, and relieved occasionally by masses of olive-trees and oaks, or habitations. Beyond which, on the other side of the Roman road, the prospect extends over the woods of Mondragone to the sea.

In every other quarter the town is surrounded by hills of a bolder character, thickly cloathed with rich forests, among which many villages show themselves in the most favourable points of view.

The cathedral, seminary, and other churches, offer nothing worthy of remark, except the sepulchral effigy, in the rudest style of sculpture, of a personage celebrated in the fifteenth century as one of the principal leaders of a powerful faction against the rule or tyranny of Ferdinand I, of Aragon.

This is in the cloisters of a suppressed convent, and is said to represent Marino Marzano, Duke of Sessa, and possessor of all the surrounding feudal tenures, among which Teano bore a primary rank.

This nobleman's hatred to his sovereign (whose sister he had married) induced him to give the most influential support to John of

Anjou, who had come to dispute, after the example of his ancestors, the rights which the Aragonese dynasty had successfully established over the possession of this kingdom. Marino Marzano received him openly in his castle of Sessa in the most splendid style of feudal grandeur, and gave him all the assistance which riches and the obedience of his numerous vassals could afford. Their united efforts were, however, unsuccessful in obtaining the desired result; and the French prince was finally compelled to quit the country, and leave his ally to make the best terms with the king which circumstances might admit of. But the unsubdued temper of the Duke of Sessa led him to carry on an open or at best ill-disguised warfare with his brother-in-law for a considerable space of time. Some native historians have preserved a most singular and interesting narrative of an interview he contrived to obtain from Ferdinand, on a lonely spot between Teano and Carinola, in which it had been his resolution to have murdered him; but Ferdinand's presence of mind and personal courage defeated his plan. This last, after a long series of reconciliations

and renewals of strife, was sufficiently dexterous to seize the person of his adversary, and cast him for the remainder of his existence into the dungeons of the Castel Nuovo, where tradition says he died, or was strangled, at an advanced age.

The existence of his monument seems incompatible with either of these modes of death; but as his son was, in a subsequent reign, restored to his title and a portion of his paternal domains, it is possible he might in after-years have thus honoured the memory of his father.

The magnitude and solidity that characterize the remains of the baronial castle at Teano, attest the power and opulence of their original founder, who was this very individual.

The stables, which are in the best state of preservation, are spacious enough to contain three hundred horses; and every corresponding portion of the fabric was upon the same scale.

From Teano it is not necessary to return to Torricella, to meet the high-road, a very good one having been constructed, which runs

under the wooded hills forming the district of Cajaniello, and the numerous villages which enliven them.

At a tavern so called, it falls into the principal branch; and at this spot, four miles from Torricella, that which I have described as leading from Piedimonte and St. Angelo, likewise reaches it. The Abruzzo road is quitted at a tavern, called Il Pagliarone, situated about a mile farther; the track to San Germano, which is now followed, deviates to the left, under the little town of Presenzano, placed most picturesquely at the base of the range of hills that flank the western side of the wide valley of the Voltorno, extending as far as Venafro.

This road runs through a dell, sufficiently wide and wooded to have deserved the name of Bosco di Presenzano, and rather ill-famed, as the occasional resort of banditti, for which the uncultivated and deserted shades through which it winds seem perfectly suited.

There is no scarcity of habitations and villages on the adjoining mountains, particularly on the left, among which Marzano and Toro

show themselves above the fine forests that clothe them; but the immediate borders of the road, even in the plain, afford nothing more reviving in the shape of human abodes than a few dreary taverns, placed at a considerable distance from each other. This is the case along the extension of thirty-four miles between Capua and San Germano; for the relics of Calvi cannot be looked upon as an exception, and the village of Mignano, the only one situated within reach of the traveller in the wilds above mentioned, has an appearance of gloom and desolation, which rather increases than suppresses the sensation of loneliness which a transit through them must naturally create; — the wretched cottages that compose it, as well as the ruins of extensive fortifications and dismantled towers scattered among them, bearing the aspect of having been blackened by smoke. The ridge on the right is of greater elevation, and its steep surface has been cleared of its native timber to make room for plantations of olives, which seem to thrive.

On this are likewise placed the large villages

of S. Pietro-in-Fine and Cervaro, with a good carriage-road leading to each.

The monastery of Monte Cassino does not show itself till the meandering direction of the road is exchanged for a straighter course, and the valley widens; when its stately mass, crowning the highest pinnacle of the hill which terminates this plain, breaks on the eye with a very imposing effect.

A nearer approach discloses the town of San Germano at its feet, while the objects which surround it add variety to the landscape.

Several little brooks run across the flat, and discharge themselves into the river Rapido, which is crossed at the entrance of the town, and shortly afterwards receives a great addition of water from many springs gushing from the roots of Monte Cassino just beyond San Germano.

A higher crest of mountains stretches to the right of the monastery, called *Le Mainarde*, and beyond these, Monte Cairo, a still more elevated peak, succeeds. The first time I visited these regions, in the month of June 1826, a snow-storm in the space of a very

few minutes, changed its black and indistinct surface into one of dazzling whiteness and brilliancy, producing a most singular and striking effect. San Germano reaches a considerable way up the side of Monte Cassino, and, like all other towns in similar situations, its upper divisions are inaccessible to carriages from the steepness of the communications. The hoüses in the lowest part are the best; and among these must be ranked the *hospice* belonging to the convent, with a handsome garden reaching to the river.

This abode is inhabited by such of the community whose health requires a milder temperature, and by the abbot almost constantly. The view from, and towards San Germano, is equally pleasing, and its position cannot fail to strike a stranger as highly eligible for a rural residence.

A belt of oak-woods extends on either side of the town, along the roots of the mountain, enlivened by villas, convents, and farms, looking over the plain. Beneath these, copious springs of the clearest water have their sources in the rock, and wander among some gardens

which they fertilize, forming a kind of oblong island between them and the broader stream of the Rapido, into which they finally discharge themselves. A fine ruin of the feudal castle stands above the town, and is itself overtopped by the venerable fabric of the convent.

With all these advantages, and a proportionate share of industry and ease, if not affluence, San Germano is considered by all strangers, and many of its own inhabitants, as being far from a desirable place of abode at all seasons, in consequence of the insalubrity of the atmosphere, arising probably more from superabundant damp than actual malaria. The copious supplies of water which run in front of the town, besides those furnished by the Rapido, occasion heavy fogs in the evening; these last the whole night, and, in still weather, are seldom dispersed the next day until the sun overtops Monte Cassino, which from its situation, is not very early, so that Silius Italicus used no poetical licence when he wrote of the *nebulosi rura Casini.*

Of the ancient city of the Volsci which bore that name, considerable and interesting remains

are still extant. A portion of it, recorded by the distinct appellation of *Forum Casini,* was contained within the precincts of the modern San Germano, at a spot which, from the number of columns which have there been found, has been considered as the site of a forum and basilica: these fragments, together with other vestiges of sculpture, and several inscriptions, have been placed in many of the modern churches. Among these a colossal stone vase is engraved with a votive offering to Hercules, who has, in consequence, been regarded as one of the tutelary deities of the place.

But the most remarkable objects of this nature are just outside of the gates, to the right of the road to Sora, on the lower slope of the mountain, beginning with the amphitheatre, the whole circuit of which is standing, though the interior seats are destroyed: it had six arched entrances faced with large square blocks of stone, most of which are still in their places, the walls being covered with opus reticulatum. This edifice, as well as a temple, was constructed by Ummidia Quadratilla, who is mentioned in the younger Pliny's letters as

a rich matron of this city who greatly delighted in games, dramatic performances, and the pantomimic art. The inscription which attests this act of munificence is preserved in the museum of the monastery; and the columns supposed to have belonged to the temple are to be seen in one of its quadrangles. A little above this are the very indistinct traces of a theatre, a large portion of a paved road with a raised footway on either side, a few other constructions, and some parts of a polygon wall.

But the most remarkable and perfect of these monuments is what appears to have been a sepulchre, to judge of it by its form and position, now converted into a chapel.

It consists interiorly of a circular chamber of very moderate dimensions, with an arch or niche on every one of its four sides, one of which is the present entrance; the construction is extremely substantial, being formed of immense blocks of travertino closely connected without any cement.

The upper vault is of the same materials cut and placed in a very ingenious manner, so as to form a cupola similar to that of the Tower

of the Winds at Athens, which on a smaller scale it somewhat resembles.

It receives but a very insufficient portion of light through four horizontal apertures like loop-holes above the arches, three of which are surrounded and covered by the hill against which it is placed, leaving only the fourth accessible from without, and this faced, or rather masked, by the modern addition of an awkward porch of stucco, in the very worst taste, so that it is impossible to guess from its exterior aspect that it is anything but a common votive chapel.

Besides these, there are other relics of Roman buildings in the flat, now converted into gardens, and on the island surrounded by the rills above mentioned. The principal among these are considered as having belonged to Varro, who gives a very minute description of the villa he possessed at Casinum, and all the appendages he had added to it; among which he mentions a museum, an aviary, and several bridges over the streams, which were then embanked with stone, the position of which, near the river Vinnius, now the Rapido,

perfectly coincides with that of these remains; —a circumstance which adds no inconsiderable share of interest to the investigation which their picturesque details alone call for.

Casinum was a city of the Volsci, of no great consequence or celebrity under either their or the Roman rule, when it became mournfully noted from having been sacked and devastated during two days by Hannibal's troops on their way from Capua to Rome.

If the immediate vicinity of San Germano offers these attractions to the amateur of remote and classic antiquity, a taste for such researches as illustrate the dark and middle ages may be likewise amply gratified by a visit to the venerable monastery, which in our days has attained the highest celebrity for learning as well as piety; and of which it may not be too much to say, that, under whatever point of view it is regarded, it holds the primary rank among all religious institutions.

The road which leads to it from the town was constructed with much care in the most flourishing days of the establishment, and is carried in a zigzag line of such slight acclivity as to

have rendered it at that period practicable for carriages; but the neglect of many years has reduced it to the condition of a mountain path, which is however neither tedious nor difficult, as the distance, with the deviations above mentioned, does not amount to more than two miles.

Some good modern villas, amidst clumps of trees, adorn the base of the hill just above the town; but the surface is in general bare and rocky, differing greatly therefore from the wooded approach to La Cava and Monte Vergine. Near the summit are erected by the road-side several vaulted buildings, adapted to the worship of some saint, and likewise to the shelter of the wayfarers during the sudden impetuous tempests peculiar to these regions, and which are more probably derived from atmospheric causes than their degree of elevation.

I was rendered most feelingly alive to the utility of these asylums during a descent from the convent, when the space of a very few minutes brought on so rapid a change of season and temperature as to baffle all description.

A collection of dark clouds, apparently rolling down from the mountain peak, completely shut out the sunshine and all its genial appendages, and enveloped me and my companions in a warfare of snows, hurricanes, and thunder-bolts, one of which struck the trunk of a tree at so small a distance as to communicate a very strong, and by no means pleasing, electrical shock to the whole party.

The architecture of the convent offers no claims to regularity, nor can it be said to be impressed with any characteristic suitable to a monastic establishment. But the magnitude and simplicity of its mass stamp it with an aspect of dignity, which is nevertheless very imposing.

At a distance it only appears like a huge fabric surmounted by a line of machiculations, forming a kind of cornice under the roof; but a nearer investigation shows some projections and recesses broken by arches and buttresses, which relieve the interminable succession of windows that occupy every front. The building covers the whole upper platform of the detached mountain on which it stands: the ground

slopes from the walls on all sides; some of the adjoining borders being converted into enclosed gardens and furnished with fruit-trees and timber of larger growth, among which are some very fine pines. It is, perhaps, to be regretted that these have not been laid out in a more ornamental style, as it is evident that the elevation of the spot is not such as to check the vegetation, especially on the south and east sides. The construction is of small stones covered with a reddish-grey stucco of a sober yet not dull hue.

It would be difficult to dignify either of the façades with the title of front from any exterior mark or distinction, except that which admits the entrance from the road through a mean archway in one corner, which is far from imposing, as the first ten yards of ingress run under a natural rocky vault, left in its primitive state in honour of the sainted founder.

This is succeeded by an ascent on an inclined plane under handsome stone arches, leading to a second gate, opening to a large court, followed by two of equal dimensions communicating with each other through open arcades.

The middle division is provided with a large cistern; and from one of its extremities a handsome flight of steps, occupying the whole width of this area, ascends to the quadrangle before the church, on a much higher level. A cloister runs all round, this last, the arches of which are sustained by fine granite columns brought from the ruins of Casinum. Under these, in niches in the wall, are placed the marble statues of all the most illustrious benefactors of the community, including numerous pontiffs and sovereigns.

Over the principal door of the church, which faces the ascent to this noble atrium, a marble inscription records its architectural history from the epoch of its first foundation, on the site of a temple of Apollo, by St. Benedict in 529, to the date of its last restoration in the year 1649; during which lapse of centuries it had to suffer from the devastations of the Lombards soon after its first foundation, from the attacks of Saracens in 884, and from repeated hostile inroads and the shocks of earthquakes at various periods.

The interior of the church, which it would

be tedious to attempt describing in detail, is perfectly regular, and profusely decorated with the richest and most varied marbles, which likewise compose the pavement, and enrich all the lateral chapels.

The great altar rests on a basement of steps under the cupola, and divides the lower portion of the church from the choir. On each side a handsome sepulchral monument is placed: one to the memory of Vido Ferramosca, Baron of Mignano; and the other erected in honour of Pietro de' Medici, the very unworthy and degenerate son of the magnificent Lorenzo, who was drowned in the river Garigliano, after the defeat of the French army, (in which he served,) by the great captain Gonsalvo di Cordova, in 1503.

This last is one of the finest works of Giuliano di San Gallo, and was executed by order of Cosmo, the first Grand-duke of Florence.

The ceiling, which is vaulted and divided into compartments, painted in fresco by Luca Giordano, is ornamented with a broad gilt frieze which adds singular magnificence to the general effect: but an immense painting, likewise in fresco, over the door of entrance, and filling

up the whole of that side of the church, is undoubtedly the most remarkable work of art which it contains, and is probably the *chef d'œuvre* of that very prolific artist. It represents the consecration of the church and monastery by Pope Alexander II, in 1071.

The lateral chapels are all dedicated to saints, popes, or distinguished abbots of the convent: among the former is numbered Carloman, brother of Pepin father to Charlemagne, who had retired to Monte Cassino. These receptacles are adorned in the same style of splendour as the rest of the edifice, and mostly contain fine paintings by various of the Neapolitan masters; among which are some by Mazzaroppi, an artist born at San Germano, and less known than his merits deserve.

The organ is reckoned, with justice, the finest in Italy, but is inferior to many in the northern parts of Europe: it had been much deteriorated by damp and neglect, but has recently been put into a complete state of repair. The grand appearance of this church, and the splendour displayed in its details, are much enhanced by the exquisite cleanliness which it exhibits, and

which is equalled by that of no other sacred edifice except St. Peter at Rome.

The doors, which are of bronze, present on their outward surface authentic demonstration of the power and opulence of the establishment in the year 1077, when they were manufactured at Constantinople.

They contain, in small divisions, a catalogue, expressed in silver inlaid letters, of all the tenures, castles, fiefs, and lands possessed by the abbey at that period.

The seats in the choir are of walnut and oak-wood, carved in the minute and ingenious manner which characterizes the most valuable works of that nature.

The rest of the monastery corresponds in dimensions and dignity with the church, but in no part advances pretensions to the same scale of magnificence, being disposed in a style of simplicity which does honour to the taste of a community composed of the highest born, as well as the most learned, among ecclesiastics: a distinction which has been endeavoured to be preserved through all the vicissitudes to which it has been subjected.

The only ornament of the refectory is an immense painting by Bassano, in excellent preservation.

The library is not equal in size to the remainder of the appendages, yet is rich in rare and valuable works; but the archives which adjoin it contain a collection of manuscripts, diplomas, chronicles, and records, which justly constitute the proudest boast of the establishment.

Among these, besides innumerable documents illustrative of the early history of these realms under the Lombards and Normans, are to be noted the original copies of Leo Ostiensis and Richard of San Germano, as well as rare manuscripts of the works of Homer, Virgil, and Dante, and, lastly, the celebrated vision of Albericus, a monk of this fraternity, from which that poet is supposed to have taken the first idea of the *Divina Commedia.*

In this apartment is likewise preserved a singular antique chair of Rosso antico, of the most exquisite workmanship, found at the thermæ of *Sujo,* near the Garigliano.

Under the arches of the cloisters, near the

archives, a numerous assemblage of Latin inscriptions found at Casinum, and mostly relating to local circumstances, has been collected.

A set of small chambers on the ground-floor are said to represent the actual abode first inhabited by St. Benedict in the infancy of the foundation; they now contain a tolerably numerous selection of paintings, among which a few good ones are to be remarked, especially one by the *Monrealese*, an artist little known out of his native Sicily.

A long range of spacious and commodious apartments is adapted, according to the rules of the convent, to the reception and habitation of strangers; and here, as well as in the church, females are allowed to enter. During both the first visits which I paid to this sanctuary, I was entertained with what the hospitable monks called a breakfast, but which, in any country, would have passed current for a substantial and excellently dressed dinner, apparently served at a very short notice; the honours of which were done by two of the principal functionaries with a degree of courtesy and unaffected ease that

might have graced the highest secular rank: but it is customary, when male visitors remain more than one day, for them to partake of the meals of the community in the refectory.

This establishment, magnificent as it still appears to a stranger, is nevertheless wofully fallen off from its original scale of grandeur and opulence when the abbot held the rank of first baron of the realm, and never went out but in a coach and six. The grants of land and feudal prerogatives, which rendered it a kind of little sovereignty, were suppressed by the French, who nevertheless respected the religious order.

King Ferdinand, after his return from Sicily, restored to it some portion of its ancient possessions, and replaced it on a more respectable footing; but still the revenue is diminished from more than one hundred thousand to twenty-four thousand ducats a year, and the number of monks from fifty to fifteen, with every other reduction in the same proportion; so that they are compelled to observe the strictest economy in keeping up the customary appendages to the establishment, such as the seminary attached to the see of San Ger-

mano, of which the abbot is bishop during the existence of his spiritual rule, limited to six years.

At the expiration of his superior functions he re-enters the class of monks, retaining the privilege of wearing the cross, and a station of precedence in great religious ceremonies.

The view from the monastery, rarely to be enjoyed in consequence of the frequent mists, is more extensive than picturesque. The front of the building above San Germano, which faces the east, looks down upon the roofs of the town, and commands a prospect of the whole plain beyond it, and of the meanderings of the river Rapido as far as its junction with the *Liris*, which only then exchanges its classical and melodious name for that of *Garigliano*.

The south and west fronts look to the broad valley watered by that river, presenting a landscape of soft fertility, bounded by a ridge of wooded hills on its right bank, and the more fantastic range that rises in the Roman territory, of which it there forms the boundary. In this valley are to be seen the

towns of Ponte Corvo, Ceperano, Aquino, Arce, and Arpino. To the north façade of the building is opposed the high and singularly gloomy Monte Cairo.

The reader will, I trust, forgive this account of Monte Cassino, which may perhaps be deemed too minute after disclaiming all intention of details; but, although these may bear great similarity to the principal features of almost every great monastic establishment, the reflection that this one may be considered as the source from which nearly all the monkish orders in Europe under different modifications derived their origin, will, I hope, create sufficient interest to compensate the tedium of description.

CHAPTER III.

Lago di Carea.—Road to Atina.—Early history of the Town.—Beauty of its Women.—Road to Mola di Gaeta.—Village of Pignataro.—Fishing town of Sperlonga.—Birth-place of Juvenal.—Ruins of Aquinum.—Ponte Corvo.—Town of Rocca Secca.—Town of Isola.—Castle of the Dukes of Sora.

About three miles from San Germano, the inhabitants show the stranger a pond, five hundred yards in circumference, which is dignified by the title of Lago di Carea, the name of a poor hamlet which probably derives it from Monte Cairo.

The walk to it along the base of Monte Cassino is pleasant; but the pool itself offers nothing curious, except the tradition of its somewhat marvellous origin, said to have occurred in the year 1724, when, after some heavy and continued rains, the earth suddenly fell in, forming a basin, at the bottom of

which appeared eighteen springs, which shortly filled up the cavity to its present level. It was stocked with eels; and the right of fishing has afforded the natives of San Germano and Carea a wide field for protracted litigation. Another longer, but more interesting excursion, may be undertaken to Atina, a town in the mountains, to which a carriage-road has recently been constructed, which it is intended to complete as far as Sora.

It runs for some distance, in a northern direction, along and between the various ramifications of the Rapido, one of which issues from a secondary valley, at the entrance of which is situated the populous and industrious village of Sant' Elia, where several manufactures are established.

The main stream is crossed at a ford, which appears likely to present obstacles, if not dangers, in the winter months; the way, after this, quits the flat cultivated ground, and, slightly deviating to the left, is carried along an uninterrupted ascent of at least five miles to Atina.

This is not only tedious, but extremely

dreary; the lateral mountains being mostly bare, with very rare portions of scanty cultivation at their lower extremities.

A dilapidated village, misnamed Belmonte, is passed about three miles before one reaches Atina, the first aspect of which town is sufficiently imposing to recall to the spectator's memory the epithet *potens* conferred upon it by Virgil.

It is placed at the extremity of the forementioned acclivity, surrounded by high and bleak mountains; but overlooking a broad and well cultivated valley, which, with the river Melfa running through it, separates its territory from that of Alvito, another large town, in appearance its twin companion, situated exactly opposite. The Melfa, enriched by the waters of the smaller stream, Molinaro, flows in a wide gravelly bed, which gives it the aspect of greater dimensions than it actually possesses, and testifies at the same time the sudden increases to which it is subject, and the ravages they occasion.

Atina, and its adjacent casali, is said to contain eight thousand inhabitants, but it can

boast of nothing except its position, and the antiquities it retains; for the interior is dirty, the streets tortuous and dark, and among its modern edifices, sacred and profane, there is not one worth noticing.

Notwithstanding its elevated situation, a ridge of still higher mountains to the south oppose the genial influence of the sun during the winter months; its climate is consequently extremely rigid at that season, and cool at all times, but reckoned likewise very healthy.

The view from it, though extensive, is impressed with a character of dreariness, which injures its general effect.

At the distance of about three miles to the north-east, the little town of Picinisco shows itself, perched in a chilly nook above the gloomy ravines through which the Melfa breaks into the valley. It boasts of an iron-foundry, the neighbouring mountains furnishing the ore; among these, the fantastic peaks of one, called Meta, are remarkable for their form and elevation.

This spot, whenever it has been named by the natives, has been noted as one of the cold-

est in the whole kingdom, and peculiar, moreover, as producing the largest proportion of *zampognari*, or bag-pipe players, whose wild attire, antic dancing, and alpine music, are familiar to most strangers who visit the capital about Christmas time.

To the north, the village of San Donato stands on a still higher elevation; and to the westward, beyond Alvito, rises Vicalvi, above the unseen lake of La Posta, the source of the Fibrenus; while, farther still in the same line, the castle of Sora is visible under the magnificent chain of hills that shuts in the horizon.

With all these requisites for what is generally termed a fine view, the tone of wintry colouring which characterizes it, gives the whole an effect far from pleasing, and from which the eye turns without regret to the examination of the relics of antiquity that present themselves in no scanty number.

They principally consist of detached portions of very ancient polygon walls, the formation of which offers nothing very remarkable as to the size of the materials, except on a hill

above the modern town, which was probably the citadel. There the blocks are large, and the whole line of walls may be traced without interruption.

The other fragments are in lower situations, as well as the substruction of a temple said to have been dedicated to Saturn, now a church, and the shell of another, sacred to Jupiter, and faced with opus reticulatum. A much superior specimen of Roman architecture is to be found in the pier of one of the city gates, with a basement of masonry composed of regular square masses, which still preserves the name of Porta Aurea. Numerous Latin inscriptions have been collected, and are preserved in the walls of several churches and other buildings, two of which record the existence of the statues of Junia Gratilla and Junia Aria Rufina, which were found at Atina, and conveyed to Naples to adorn the palace of its feudal lord, Diomed Carafa, Count of Madaloni.

Some traces of the antique paved road are evident in some of the streets, to the examination of which I was ceremoniously conducted by nearly the whole juvenile portion of the

population, who evinced a degree of curiosity at the appearance of strangers, which proved that it was not an event of common occurrence; this was, however, unattended by any symptom savouring of rudeness or ill-will, from which we were moreover protected by the assistance of a *galantuomo* of the place, who voluntarily assumed the office of cicerone, of which he acquitted himself very creditably, and for the performance of which he only demanded as a reward that we should take up our abode in his house for some days: this, as it was very early, we of course declined, notwithstanding the eager suggestions of our numerous retinue, who extolled in very high-flown terms the splendour of his palazzo, and the excellent fare it would afford us.

In Roman history Atina is first alluded to as a city of the Volsci: it was subdued by the arms of the republic in the year 441, at the same time with Nola and Calatia; after which it appears to have fallen under the domination of the Samnites, and as such sacked by the Romans nineteen years afterwards: it then was reduced to the condition of a prefecture,

and in that state mentioned by Cicero; but afterwards admitted to the rank of a municipium, and noted as the birth-place of Munatius Plancus.

Ughelli, in his "Italia Sacra," has published a chronicle of Atina, in which its original foundation is ascribed to no less a personage than Saturn, whose sepulchre (with a Latin inscription) is gravely asserted to have been discovered within its precincts.

It would be unfair to take leave of this spot without some reference to a distinction which I have heard conferred upon it by the unanimous assent of all Neapolitans, including the authority of their late sovereign, King Ferdinand I.; and that is, the beauty of its women, which, nevertheless, I afterwards found to be overrated: it must, however, be admitted that a very superior height of stature, straightness of limb, and regularity of feature, were frequently observable, to which was added a striking, though dark, brilliancy of complexion.

But these advantages appeared to be possessed only by such of the softer sex as had already passed the age of thirty, and who there-

fore, in these latitudes, had already outstepped the maturity of beauty; for whatever might be the cause, which I had not leisure to investigate, no female of tenderer years was stamped with the same attractive character.

It may perhaps not be uninteresting to the amateurs of horticulture to learn, that the only yellow double roses I ever saw blooming in a state of entire perfection were growing under a range of polygon walls in a neglected vineyard at Atina.

It is possible to go from San Germano to Mola di Gaeta, the distance in a direct line being about eighteen miles; but the road, or rather way, is so very impracticable that I cannot recommend it to even the most persevering investigator of interior topography. Having, however, undertaken this excursion in ignorance of its difficulties, I shall venture to offer the following account of it. As far as the Garigliano, the obstacles are not very formidable; and the country, well cultivated, wooded, and watered by numerous streams, renders the ride very agreeable,—Monte Casino and San Germano breaking occasionally through the

masses of forest scenery in the most favourable points of view.

The path is conducted through the large village of Pignataro, where several antiquities have been found; and which, moreover, is recorded as the spot assigned by the abbots of the monastery to the residence of the stipendiary corps of Normans which they took into pay in the early part of the eleventh century, shortly after their first appearance in these regions.

This warlike troop had fortified Pignataro, and from their stronghold watched over the vast domains appertaining to the abbey, and protected them from the predatory incursions of their rapacious neighbours the Counts of Aquino and others.

The Garigliano is crossed in a ferry-boat at San Giorgio, a village placed on its banks, in a marshy, and, consequently, unhealthy position, but surrounded by rich cultivation.

From this place the town of Ponte Corvo has a very imposing aspect; and in front, Rocca Guglielma, on an apparently inaccessible rock, amidst frightful precipices and gloomy forests,

produces a very extraordinary and picturesque effect.

The track, if the stony bed of a torrent can be so called, ascends the mountain in its steepest parts, and either to mounted or pedestrian travellers imposes a task so laborious, that I consider it by far the most fatiguing undertaking I ever achieved. After passing under the little dreary village of Castelnuovo, we halted beneath another, named Le Fratte,—both appellations of frequent recurrence in this kingdom.

Here, under the vaulted porch of a miserable tavern, we halted; and, though our appetite obtained but scanty refection from a meagre repast of eggs and cheese, our exertions seemed quite overpaid by the luxury of snow to cool our wine: it is only on such occasions, after the toils of such a journey in the midsummer temperature of latitude 42°, that the full value of such an article of refreshment can be duly appreciated.

We resumed our progress; and, a little farther, were cheered by the prospect (through a gap in the mountains) of smoother regions

near the sea, and the promontory of Mondragone, or Mount Massicus. A gentle descent, on an amended path, led us southwards to a little secluded plain shaded by olive-trees, the principal vegetation in this district; and to a church, once belonging to a ruined monastery of which I could never learn the name. The interior, which had been renewed and whitewashed, to the utter destruction of all appearance of venerable antiquity, has, nevertheless, retained some tombs of the fifteenth century, bearing inscriptions that prove it to have been at that period a sanctuary of great renown and resort.

After this, the declivity increases, and the path crosses a stream of such icy coldness, that it was impossible to keep the hand in it for more than half a minute: I take it to be the Ausente, which, after reaching the flat country, waters a plain that bears its name, and flows into the Garigliano under the town of Fraetto. Between this and the sea-shore, to which we were rapidly descending, large portions of an ancient Roman road were frequently visible; and, after passing the village of Castel

Onorato on the right, we observed very considerable masses of fine masonry, composed of square blocks, apparently the substructions of higher fabrics, many of which were regularly disposed in straight rows.

These, which might have belonged to the ruins of Ausona, a city mentioned by Livy, were scattered among thickets, bowers, and shady avenues of myrtle, far exceeding in height and luxuriance those that form what are termed *macchie* on the coast of the Adriatic. From these balmy recesses, the prospect of the Gulf of Gaeta, far surpassing in every respect that of the Bay of Naples, was delicious: the path enters the highroad to the capital about three miles to the east of Mola, where I rested after the fatigues of this very laborious day's journey.

The road I had followed is, with all its difficulties, the most frequented line of communication between the interior of the province and the sea, and the only one which affords to the inland proprietors the opportunity of disposing of the produce of their land, chiefly consisting of grain.

A much readier, and more natural, mode of conveyance offers itself in the course of the Garigliano, flowing in sufficient depth through the very districts that furnish these supplies; but, above the bridge which exists near the ancient Minturnæ, no boats have ever been constructed that would admit the means of safe and commodious transportation; the only vessels in use being flat-bottomed punts, called *sandali*, of such awkward and weak fabrication, that the farmers, who have attempted to make use of them, have found the risk and expense to outweigh all the disadvantages and delays of land-carriage.

About eight miles to the west of Gaeta, stands *Zperlonga*, dignified by the name of town; but containing little more than eight hundred inhabitants, mostly fishermen: it stands on a little sandy cape projecting into the sea, with anchorage on either side, according to the prevailing wind, for the boats used by the natives.

I went to it by water, as the quickest mode of communication from Gaeta: the coast, though by no means flat, offers nothing very

attractive or remarkable after the stupendous bulwark of perpendicular rocks that guard the above-mentioned town on the sea-side.

Sperlonga was anciently called Speluncæ, a name easily accounted for by the numerous natural caves that exist in its vicinity: one of these claims some notice, and was indeed the only object of my visit, as having been mentioned both by Tacitus and Suetonius, who record an event that happened there, which had nearly proved fatal to the Emperor Tiberius, who possessed a villa on the spot, of which this grotto formed one of the appendages. During a supper, which he gave in it, several large stones fell in from the vault amidst the guests, some of whom were injured by the accident; but Sejanus extended his arms over his master, and interposed his whole person to protect him from the impending peril; which action is supposed to have established the foundation of the long continuance of favour afterwards enjoyed by this unworthy favourite.

In its present state, it offers the remains of seats, divisions, and relics of ornaments in stucco on the face of the grotto, which is a crumb-

ling breccia. The path that leads to it from the village, and which is about half a mile long by the water-side, is likewise bordered with Roman remains, which point out the direction of the Via Flacca, leading from Terracina to Gaeta.

In less remote times, the existence of Sperlonga was called from the obscurity in which it had naturally sunk, by the temporary residence of the anti-pope Clement VII, who retired to it after his election at Fondi, and affixed its name to the date of several bulls of censure and excommunication, which, previous to his removing to Avignon, he vainly fulminated against his antagonist, and the powers that upheld him.

About three centuries back it was visited by a much more formidable and successful personage. The noted Hayradin Barbarossa effected a descent at Sperlonga in 1534, and made it a resting-place for one night, previous to attacking the town of Fondi, with the especial charge (if we are to believe contemporaries) of carrying away the widow of its feudal lord, Julia Gonzaga. This lady, esteemed the most

beautiful of her day, had only time to escape on horseback from the castle, in a dishabille the most unfitted to galloping over a mountain; but the inhabitants, having made an ineffectual attempt to resist, were massacred without mercy, and the town given up to pillage; after which the Africans withdrew to their galleys, and put to sea again with the booty they had collected in this singular expedition.

In its present state, Sperlonga, though it more than once was honoured by the abode of the late King Ferdinand on some of his sporting expeditions, must offer but a comfortless residence. The view from it to the north-west is however not without some interesting features; commanding, as it does, the Islands of Ponza and Ventotene, the Lake of Fondi, Monte Circello, and the well-known picturesque rock of Terracina.

Returning to the Abruzzo road, to which it is hoped the above digression will not be deemed too foreign, I shall proceed to describe that leading from San Germano to Sora along the plain of the Liris; which river, though flowing in a broader stream than it does nearer its junc-

tion with the sea, is seldom visible from a level but little raised above its own.

The land is well cultivated; first with wheat growing under fine oaks, scattered so plentifully throughout this whole region that they may be looked upon as the peculiar features of the flatter districts in the Terra di Lavoro, except within a certain distance of the capital, where the advantages derived from a more mixed system of cultivation had probably caused their removal. To these succeed vines, trained on pollared fruit-trees, as in the valley of Foligno, which this tract much resembles.

The mountains on the right are bare at their summits, but well wooded, and not scantily provided with villages or small towns at their base: of these, as nearest the plain, though placed on acclivities, Villa, Piedimonte, Palazzolo, Colle, and Caprile, are the most conspicuous; the few that are on the left of the road are not visible, either from the flatness of their situation or the trees that surround them.

About four miles from San Germano, and

shortly after passing Piedimonte, a track turns off to the left near a large square tower, called of San Gregorio, probably of Lombard structure, but rising from a Roman foundation, and having many Latin inscriptions among the stones in its walls.

Following the same path, through open fields, the distance of about two miles brings one to an ancient and dilapidated church, called Santa Maria della Libera, within the precincts of Aquinum, a city of considerable importance when possessed by the Volsci, and their conquerors the Romans.

The city of Aquinum was, under the Romans, noted as the birth-place of the poet Juvenal and the short-reigned Emperor Pescennius Niger; and became in Christian times no less celebrated for that of Saint Thomas, the son of one of its counts, whose united knowledge and piety obtained for him, in after ages, the name of the Angelic Doctor, and the reputation of being the most sanctified of the learned, and the most learned of the saints.

This church, of which the outward walls and steeple only are extant, is apparently of Nor-

man architecture. The buttresses, porches, recesses, and carved windows, which still adorn it, and which are executed with no ordinary skill, give it a very picturesque aspect; but it advances higher claims to the notice of the antiquary, as standing on the site, and showing the exact dimensions, of a temple of Hercules. This is proved by an inscription, as well as by the lower tier of masonry forming the basement of the more modern walls, and still retaining its original form and position.

Above these, the upper ranges, though evidently of antique cut and probably furnished by ancient buildings, are connected with less regularity, and interspersed, as usual, with Latin inscriptions, sometimes reversed. At one extremity of this edifice an excavation had lately been dug, and the base of a large Doric column found, probably one of those that formed the portico; and, at the other end, a long flight of steps, descending to a lower level, preserves the same character of identity, with a large marble pavement above it, in front of the doorway of the church, which platform must likewise have belonged to the temple. In

some garden-grounds adjoining these remains stands another relic of antiquity, no less remarkable, and much better preserved.

This is an arch or gateway of no very considerable dimensions, exhibiting great elegance of design and good execution.

The columns placed at each exterior angle are surmounted with capitals of an ornate and composite order, while the shorter pillars sustaining the arch are Ionic.

A water-course, now purposely directed under this as the shortest line to a mill which it works, precludes the investigation of the interior; while the rank vegetation springing from the banks has acquired an elevation and density which prevent a correct estimate of its proportions being formed.

This stream (which, after turning the mill, falls into the original river from which it is withdrawn some hundred yards above,) was mistaken by Strabo, who, alluding to Aquinum, says that the Melfa flows near or through it: but that river is four miles distant to the north-west; and this brook, now called by the natives Songie or Sogne, rises at a spot called

Capo d'Acqua, near Palazzolo. Its united waters, on leaving the mill, pass under a fine Roman bridge of one arch, over which the pavement of Via Latina, with a raised footway on each side, is carried in a straight line for a considerable distance, as far as a gateway of grandiose but simple construction, which probably formed the principal entrance to the city of Aquinum.

A range of walls of large blocks laid in regular courses has its commencement from this gateway, and continues to be visible for the space of half a mile. On quitting the interior of the city, the ruins of a circus and a theatre present themselves to the right; they are much dilapidated, and the remains of the former are composed of ignoble brick-work, while the latter is all of travertino.

Beyond these are four masses of masonry, at nearly equal distances from each other, of which two were temples, probably of Ceres Helvina, and Diana, (mentioned by Juvenal,) and the two others square sepulchral monuments.

The largest of the former consists of the whole wall that rose at the back, in its entire

dimensions, surmounted with a cornice, entablature, triglyphs, and guttæ; but so shaken by earthquakes that the light is seen through the interstices of the stones.

The base of the lateral wall is likewise discernible, as well as portions of the columns of the portico in front; while a double row of pillars, of which fragments still remain in their original position, appears to have formed an approach to it.

The second temple is much smaller, and only remarkable from having a curved niche at the back protruding exteriorly. One of the tombs is constructed of immense blocks of unhewn stone placed in an unconnected manner, while the symmetrical regularity which characterises the other bespeaks a less remote mode of fabrication.

The modern Aquino is situated, not unpleasantly, about a quarter of a mile from the site of the ancient town, on a bank overlooking a well-cultivated tract of land; but war and pestilence in ancient times, and the no less destructive effects of malaria at a more recent period, have reduced the population to about six hundred inhabitants.

It was, from the solidity of its fortifications rather than its local position, always considered a place of considerable strength; and its castaldi and counts ranked high, during the middle ages, among the number of petty tyrants of this province, who, though nominally under the vassalage of the princes of Capua, asserted an independence which was mainly supported by a continued state of warfare and depredation among each other.

A characteristic instance of the wild barbarity of that æra is recorded in one of these contests in the tenth century, when Athenulfus, castaldus of Aquino, effected a forcible entrance into the monastery of Monte Cassino; and, after committing every species of sacrilegious outrage, carried away the abbot for the purpose of sewing him in a bear's skin, to be hooted by his soldiers and worried by his dogs.

About one hundred years after this, and subsequently to the Norman invasion, Aquino became remarkable for the reconciliation between Robert Guiscard and Gregory VII, who at the same time granted to the former the investiture of the duchies of Apulia and Calabria.

Its episcopal see, now united to that of Sora, where the bishop resides, extends its jurisdiction over a considerable portion of the province. The town of Pontecorvo,* divided in two portions by the Liris, and subject, with some intervals of exception, to the sway of the Pope ever since the year 1463, stands about four miles from Aquino. Like Benevento, it is entirely surrounded by the Neapolitan territory; but at so short a distance from the Roman frontier, that it is a matter of surprise that no arrangement has ever been entered into by the parties concerned to place it in immediate contact with the state to which it belongs.

Its counts were powerful vassals in the middle ages; and through one of those singular political vicissitudes which have marked the beginning of the present century, the last sovereign of Pontecorvo stepped from the possession of its insignificant principality, upon one of the thrones of Scandinavia.

Aquino is not more than a mile from the high-road between San Germano and Sora,

* A good carriage-road has now been established (1835) from that leading to Sora and Pontecorvo.

though the narrow track which I had been directed to take more than doubled the distance. These ways are, however, impracticable for a carriage in winter; and difficult, as I experienced, even in summer, if any recent rains have fallen, and have left pools which soon become sloughs.

The river Melfa, a wild ungovernable mountain torrent, is crossed about four miles beyond Aquino over a handsome bridge, which, as well as a large substantial inn near it, is of recent construction.

This stream, which I have before had occasion to mention, rises in the higher regions of the Apennines, nearly at the foot of the mountain called La Meta, and, after a devious course of about twenty miles, finally enters the plain of the Liris near Rocca Secca, two miles above the bridge, and discharges itself into that river between Ceprano and Pontecorvo. The little town of Rocca Secca, united to its adjoining villages or casali, named Villa and Caprile, contains about three thousand inhabitants.

It was originally built by an abbot of Monte

Cassino, but soon became attached to the domains of the counts of Aquino.

At two different periods of the fifteenth century, the plain that stretches before it along the Melfa became the scene of hostile encounters; first, between the contending armies of Ladislas King of Naples (of the Durazzo line) and Louis of Anjou; and later, in 1458, between the papal forces allied to Ferdinand of Aragon, and those of René of Anjou, who disputed his possession of the Neapolitan throne.

In modern times it has attached its name to a powder said to be found, but probably manufactured, there; which has acquired much celebrity as an efficacious medicine, or rather preservative, against intermittent fevers. Beyond the Melfa, the hills gradually close in upon the valley, giving additional effect to the picturesque tract of forest scenery which follows.

The little town of Arce, and Rocca d'Arce at no great distance, on the right of the road, are passed about four miles from the river: the last of these two is looked upon as the representative of the ancient *Arx*, a name sufficiently

expressive in itself of the extraordinary position which it occupies; it is, indeed, difficult to imagine a spot apparently so well formed by nature to withstand the efforts of a besieging army.

On this account it was ever considered in the light of a stronghold, especially during the middle ages, when the portion of the kingdom in which it is placed was so repeatedly subjected to the irruptions of invading armies. Nevertheless, this apparently impregnable fortress was frequently carried by assault, even before the introduction of artillery, and has lost all its importance in the eyes of modern engineers.

It retains vestiges of its antique origin, in the shape of polygon walls; and near it, at a spot called Fontana Buona, there exist some brick ruins which point out the site of a villa belonging to Quintus Tullius, the brother of the orator, who has in one of his letters described the merits of this habitation with some detail. Many inscriptions relative to the Tullian family have likewise been excavated in the neighbourhood.

From the road to Sora, another, branching

off to the left, brought to its completion in the year 1831, leads to Ceprano, on the right bank of the Liris,—a town usually designated as the point of boundary between the two states. But the Roman frontier extends for at least half a mile to the left of the river. Nothing can, indeed, be more irregularly, not to say capriciously, delineated than these limits, which come in contact with the Liris near Monte San Giovanni, a Roman town a few miles above Ceprano; follow its banks for a short distance; cross them, as above described, to enclose a scanty portion of territory without even one habitation upon it; and are finally carried back to the other shore to recede from it altogether. From the bridge of Ceprano, which, as one of the few on the Liris, has always been considered as an influential military post in all invading expeditions, a road to Rome has long existed by the towns of Frosinone, Ferentino, Agnani, and Valmontone, the whole extension of which offers a much nearer channel of communication between the two capitals than the usual one along the Pontine marshes. But the ancient track between Arce and the Liris

was barely practicable for carriages during the summer months: and the inconveniences, and even perils, attending the passage of the Melfa previous to the construction of the present bridge, deterred most travellers from undertaking the expedition. Now that these obstacles are removed, and that better accommodation as to horses and inns may be looked to as the consequence, it is not unreasonable to expect that the line of the Via Latina will excite the interest and awaken the curiosity of travellers, who will find some trifling difficulties amply compensated by the reduction of distance along a level and excellent road, by the beauty of the scenery, and by the numerous objects of notice presented by such spots as Calvi, Monte Cassino, Aquino, and the towns scattered along the valley of the Hernici in the Roman states. About two miles below Ceprano, along a tolerable carriage-road, stands *Isoletta*, a wretched village of about two hundred inhabitants feebly struggling against poverty and malaria: it belongs to the Neapolitan territory; and I visited it during a residence in the neighbourhood, in the hope of finding some

vestiges of antiquity. These exist, consisting of the remains of two bridges rather more than a mile distant from one another; the arches are destroyed, but the structure of the piers on each side, though fallen, is visible; and that of the second bridge, on the left bank of the stream, is united to a square basement of fine masonry, probably the foundation of a gate, or watch-tower, which preserves its original station and symmetry.

The river Tolero or Sacco, anciently the Trerus, flows into the Liris between these bridges; and, as the town of Fregellæ was situated on the banks of this last, they might be those which Livy tells us were destroyed by the inhabitants to obstruct the progress of Hannibal from Capua to Rome.

Fregellæ was, in Strabo's time, reduced to the condition of a village (*vicus*); but it is mentioned as one of the stations of the Via Latina, in the Antonine Itinerary. Some more remains of ancient buildings strewn between the river and the modern town of San Giovanni in Carico, about two miles distant, seem to corroborate this supposition.

This last place stands in a most beautiful position, on an eminence, under some higher hills, overlooking the fertile, varied, and well-cultivated bank which extends along the right shore of the Liris from Ceprano to Pontecorvo.

This digression has led me from the main road: this, a little way beyond Arce, is brought very near the bed of the river, which nevertheless remains concealed by the trees and intervening cultivation. A stream of remarkable transparency and rapidity crosses the road, emitting a strong odour of sulphur. This rises below the village of Fontana, placed on an insulated hill two miles to the right, and is formed by a collection of acidulated, saline, chalybeate, and hot springs gushing from the earth near the vestiges of some ancient thermæ.

Tradition has, naturally enough, preserved the memory of an extinct volcano in this vicinity, but the fact has never been accurately investigated. The brook, notwithstanding these peculiarities, is said to produce excellent trout.

The country after this, can no longer be called a valley, for, though the road runs in a parallel line with the Liris, its hitherto level course

is changed, and a considerable ascent brings it to a point where another branches off to the right, leading to Arpino, and from which the little Roman town of Monte San Giovanni, already mentioned, shows itself on the opposite bank.

The declivity which succeeds carries the road to the immediate banks of the river, which is seen of a thick clay-coloured hue, swiftly flowing in a deep channel overhung with alders and other aquatic plants. A little farther it assumes a more picturesque aspect from a series of low cataracts, which it forms near an island called San Paolo, between two branches of the stream.

This is accessible by means of a ferry, and measures about six moggia, or acres, partly cultivated, and partly clothed with the most luxuriant wild vegetation. This spot, which possesses the charm of verdure and freshness so rare in meridional latitudes, has two mills upon it; and offers an object of greater interest in a fine Roman arch, apparently the relic of a bridge which crossed the river here: it has withstood the ravages of time and the fury of

the stream, and may probably have originally caused the formation of the island itself by checking the progress of the stones, wood, and other solid substances rolled along by the river, which collected and increased till they assumed their present shape.

Shortly after passing this, the high platform that rises above the town of Isola is visible, with the numerous houses, villas, and manufactories, that are scattered over its surface; and the village of Castelluccio, on an eminence on the other bank of the Liris: half an hour more brings one in view of the town itself, and the striking features that distinguish it.

The picturesque celebrity of this spot has barely travelled beyond the boundaries of Campania, though it is entitled to an equal rank with that of Tivoli, Terni, or any of those regions which derive their peculiar charms from waterfalls and their various accompaniments. I was, nevertheless, more struck by the singularity than the actual beauty of its position.

The town, which is but small, is contained in the flat space surrounded by two branches of the Liris, which give it the name it bears, each

of which is derived from a cascade of considerable height, springing from a point where an huge rock opposing itself to the course of the stream, causes their division: one of these falls is perpendicular, about ninety-six feet high, and seen from the road; the other, fully as abundant of water, rushes down an inclined plane about six hundred palms in extent, but yields to the other in effect.

On the upper extremity of the mass which thus checks and divides the river in two portions, is placed a castle, once the abode of the dukes of Sora, the solid construction of which, though not strictly Gothic, is so broken into projections, turrets, arches, terraces, and pinnacles, that the whole fabric, rising as if by magic from the spray of the cascade, and varying in light, shade, and colouring, from the incessant action of its vapours, presents a picture which has few, if any parallels.

This building, purchased some time back from the feudal possessor by the Neapolitan government, is now let to serve as a cloth manufactory, and has therefore lost all its claims to interior notice. The bridge leading

to the back of it from the left bank of the river has been destroyed, and there is now no access to it from the upper level,—the only way being to descend to the town below, traverse its streets, and the two bridges of entrance and egress, and then ascend again along the edge of the second or inclined cascade: this leads into what was the garden, from which a wooden foot-bridge, temporarily erected over the narrow channel conducting the surplus of the waters of the first to the second cataract, gives admission into the portal and inner court of the mansion.

This garden, neglected and overgrown with weeds, still retained, in the year 1826, some vestiges of the taste which had designed it; fountains, marble pedestals, and vases, avenues of fine trees, thickets of flowering shrubs, and architectural alcoves still shaded by jessamine and honeysuckle, attested the care and expense bestowed upon its original formation. It extends in a line from the mansion and the two cascades, along the margin of the upper level of the river, which here glides smoothly in that

sullen majesty of depth, so well characterised by the lines of Horace:

> Non rura quæ Liris, quietâ
> Mordet aquâ, taciturnus amnis:

An aspect singularly contrasted by that which the impetuosity of the waterfall gives to it but a few paces farther.

These grounds, filling up the whole space between the stream and a precipitous wooded bank, that rises on the opposite side and excludes all distant view, appeared at that period gifted with a charm of solitude and tranquillity which I had never seen so strongly impressed on any other spot. But during the last visit I paid to scenes so attractive, they had lost even these faint remains of their former existence, and presented no other appearance than that of a wasted and swampy flat.

To return to the town of Isola: it contains about three thousand inhabitants, almost all of whom are positively, or indirectly, interested in the labours of the various manufactures of cloth, paper, or iron wire, which owe their activity to the existence of the Liris.

CHAPTER IV.

Departure from Isola.—Scenery of the Liris.—Feudal tenure of Isola.—Cicero's Villa.—The River Fibrenus.—Town of Arpino.—Convent at Veroli.—Town of Sora.—Mountain Cascades.—Civita D'Antina.—Its antiquity.—Source of the Liris.—History of the Fucine Lake.—Gladiatorial Spectacle.—Scene of Corradino's defeat.—View from Mount Salviano.

Leaving Isola to the left, the road ascends a gentle slope, the termination of which brings it on a level with the castle, while the right bank is adorned by a succession of villas commanding views of the town, and the windings of the river below it. The last of these is a handsome dwelling-house, attached to a large and flourishing paper manufactory, shaded by magnificent lime-trees, under which the residue of the streams that work its machinery forms a very picturesque cascade in its descent to the Liris.

In one of the habitations of this district,

which is called Santa Maria delle Forme, I was fortunate enough to secure a residence the first time I visited those rural scenes: and the hospitable reception I then received from its owner, a rich retired merchant of Arpino, established the foundation of an intercourse of amicable relations which I have ever since enjoyed. His villa is one of the prettiest in the vicinity, and is, moreover, fitted up in a style of comfort which recalls the habits of our native abodes.

The soil of this valley is clayey, and the least rain makes it so soft and slippery as to render the act of walking very unpleasant at such times; a circumstance unfavourable to it as a winter dwelling: it is nevertheless fertile, and peculiarly favourable to the vegetables and fruits of colder climates.

The features of the country are well defined, and it is sufficiently wooded and cultivated to justify in a great measure the pre-eminence for beauty which has generally been allowed to it.

If one follows the immediate banks of the Liris, nothing can surpass the varied details

of romantic scenery which its course presents; but the moment one withdraws from it, all those charms are lost; as from not one of the villas above mentioned can the river be seen, running, as it does, in a deep ravine, overshadowed by trees, considerably below the general level. Another drawback upon the landscape is owing to the formality of the style of cultivation, the vines being trained upon elms, planted at regular distances, and all pollared very low in the most ungraceful manner.

The adjoining hills have almost all been despoiled of the timber which probably clothed them, to make room for olives, whose slow growth and dull foliage entirely fail in adding any attraction to the prospect.

The foundation of Isola di Sora cannot be traced to any very remote period of antiquity, and probably does not reach beyond the beginning of the eleventh century, during which it is alluded to in some records and diplomas as *Insula filiorum Petri,* which Petrus was a castaldus, or governor of the district.

Some antiquaries, misled, naturally enough, by the peculiarity of the situation, have looked

upon it as the representative of the Interamna *Lirinas*, mentioned by Livy, Cicero, and Strabo; but the authority of these writers is conclusive of a contrary hypothesis, placing it on the Via Latina,—consequently, at some distance from this spot. Strabo positively says, that Interamna was situated at the confluence of the river from Casinum, (the Vinnius or Rapido,) with the Liris; and Romanelli has identified its site with that of some ruins between the former stream and the *Sogne* that flows from Aquino. No vestiges of antiquity have ever been found within the precincts, or in the immediate vicinity, of the modern Isola; all which circumstances combine to divest it of any archaiologic interest. The castle, or ducal palace, built by its feudal possessors, who with justice preferred the situation to that of Sora, probably gave it some importance, and was the means of increase to its population after the middle ages; but the comparative prosperity it now enjoys is undoubtedly due to the manufactures which have been established there. These advantages have nevertheless been occasionally counterbalanced by the calamitous occurrences to

which its immediate contact with the Roman states has subjected it. At more than one period in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, it was devastated by small troops of brigands, one of which, under a celebrated commander surnamed Papone, used to levy taxes, and assume all the privileges of a feudal sovereign.

On the first entrance of the French armies in 1798, it underwent disasters of a similar nature, which were unfortunately too frequently repeated in consequence of the unsubmitting disposition of the natives.

The feudal tenure of Isola once belonged to the family of the *Cantelmi*, celebrated in the annals of the kingdom for their large possessions in its northern district, the influence it conferred upon them, and the overbearing and turbulent manner in which they exerted it.

After the memorable conspiracy of the barons against Ferdinand, who not only defeated their machinations, but struck the feudal power a blow which it never recovered, the Cantelmi were subdued, together with the other unsuccessful aspirants to independence, and

deprived of their extensive domains in this part of the realm, which were bestowed upon other families.

In the course of time, however, the dispersed portions of this property were re-united, at the end of the sixteenth century, under the sway of Giacomo Buoncompagno, son of Gregory XIII, (before his accession to the papal chair,) who became Duke of Sora and proprietor of all the surrounding country on the banks of the Liris. The last possessor, father of the present Prince of Piombino, (Buoncompagno Ladovisi,) resigned this principality, and all the privileges attached to it, to the Neapolitan government for a stated sum, which was afterwards commuted to the grant of other estates; and it has ever since formed part of the public domains.

Some of the older inhabitants of Isola still remember, with feelings of gratitude, the magnificence and princely hospitality displayed by these Roman lords during their periodical visits to their Neapolitan possessions. On these occasions they brought with them a numerous assortment of illustrious guests, including princesses and prelates, from the Roman capital;

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together with a large retinue of attendants and domestics, who all came by a road from Ferentino through Veroli, now impracticable for carriages.

The higher classes among the residents in the neighbouring towns of Sora and Arpino were usually invited to the banquets and entertainments which formed an essential part of the *villegiatura*; among which last, dramatic performances by a company of comedians expressly brought from Rome were frequently exhibited: concerts by the musical amateurs of Arpino were likewise executed, the expenses of which, as well as those attending the conveyance of the visitors from their respective dwellings, were defrayed by the noble proprietor, who carried his munificence, in this respect, so far as likewise to supply all the losses incurred at the gaming-table by the gentlemen of Isola. All these glories have passed away; and it is to be hoped that a more equal distribution of ease and humble affluence among all ranks of inhabitants, attending on the diffusion of industry and manufactures, has long since amply compensated whatever sensations

of regret may be blended with these splendid recollections.

A mile beyond the spot where I was so hospitably received, the river Fibreno, after crossing the road to Sora, which runs along the left bank of the Liris, rushes into this last stream, from the right, near an ancient church dedicated to S. Dominico, and which has been considered as standing on the site of one of Cicero's most favourite villas.

The detailed account he gives of it, in his work *De Lege*, and the peculiarity of its position on a spot contained between two branches of the Fibrenus, appear to favour this supposition; but the claims to this honour have been successfully disputed by another island, situated very little higher up on the same river: in both, vestiges of Roman buildings are to be seen, and, among those still existing, together with some inscriptions, at the above-mentioned church, a fragment of a bas-relief, representing a battle, is remarkable from its style of execution.

The other and more distant islet now bears the name of *Carnello*, and contains a paper ma-

nufactory dependent on that at *Le Forme*. The course of the Fibrenus receives no tributary stream in the whole of its limited extension; a circumstance which, while it secures to it unimpaired coldness and transparency, divests it likewise of the means of sudden increase or inundation; and is supposed to impart superior excellence of flavour to the varieties of fish which it produces: among these the trout hold the first rank, and certainly greatly surpass those (nevertheless very good) furnished by the Liris.

The waters of this beautiful stream rise about four miles from Isola, under the village of La Posta, from a little lake abounding with wild fowl. It is of moderate size, but immense depth; and so clear, that the copious springs which supply it may be seen bubbling out of apparently fathomless caverns at the bottom.

The spot is wild and worthy of notice, and the ride to it from Isola one of the pleasantest in the neighbourhood.

The finest view of Isola and all its interesting appendages is obtained from a hill, called San Giovenale, facing the town, on the

other side of the road; this is of sufficient altitude to command, not only both cascades in their full dimensions, but likewise the previous meanderings of the river, and a fine reach of the upper valley as far as the city of Sora, backed by the mountains of Abruzzo.

The effect of such a landscape, glowing, as I viewed it, with the tints of a midsummer sunset, was greatly enhanced by the group which distinguished the foreground.

On a limestone bank of the richest hue, beneath one of the fine oaks that shade the whole mountain, sat a stripling goatherd, of about sixteen, holding a nest with two wood-pigeons in it, while a large white Abruzzese dog lay at his feet, guarding the flock of goats confided to his keeping.

The lad's sister shortly joined him from a pagliara, or straw hut, in the adjoining thicket, with a pail, which, being exchanged for the nest in his hand, was soon used to collect the evening supplies furnished by the shaggy herd. Both children were handsome and healthy, and their attire was of that nature which, in these climates only, invests poverty with a pictu-

resque charm; and the scene was an animated representation of those which Virgil's eclogues have taught us to dream of, but which the artificial habits and ungenial temperature of our regions can never exhibit.

A horse-road, once practicable for carriages, leads from Isola to Arpino, distant about three miles; but that which communicates from this town with the capital, falls into the San Germano track, about four miles from Isola, rendering the journey that way longer by rather more than that distance.

Arpino is situated on a very high hill, with a more extensive than gratifying view over the surrounding country: it has, for a long series of years, been noted for its manufactures of woollen cloths, as the best in the kingdom, but which have lately encountered successful competition from those established at Isola.

To the classical scholar it recommends itself in a more interesting light, as the birth-place of three of the most celebrated persons in Roman history,—C. Marius, M. T. Cicero, and M. Agrippa, son-in-law to Augustus.

In modern times it has produced Giuseppe

Cesari, a painter of some renown, better known as the Cavaliere D'Arpino; and Egiziello, a soprano singer of great reputation in the last century. The natives of this place are famous for their aptitude to the musical art, and all strangers who visit it are usually entertained with an amateur concert of both vocal and instrumental music, which, though got up extempore, would not be misplaced in the most accomplished capital of Europe.

This town, first belonging to the Volsci, next to the Samnites, and lastly to the Romans, contains at the present day about ten thousand inhabitants. Its elevated position, on several different levels, does not admit of much regularity in the streets, which are consequently narrow and tortuous; but the houses are generally well built, and it exhibits an air of ease and prosperity which is very satisfactory.

The remains of antiquity that are still extant, are to be seen at the very highest extremity of the mountain on which the city is placed, which retains the distinctive appellation of Civita Vecchia: these consist principally of walls, composed of immense blocks of stone

connected without cement, but with a certain regularity, therefore not deserving the name of Cyclopian or polygonal: these stretch from the lower regions of the town to the extreme point above mentioned, and unite at a very sharp angle behind a large square tower erected in the middle ages, and said to have served as a residence for King Ladislas.

Near this is a very curious gateway, having at a distance the appearance of a pointed arch, but composed in reality of stones reaching over each other till they meet and produce this effect, which is heightened by the interior of the mass being artificially shaped to a slight curvature.

The peculiar construction of this monument proves it to be of much more remote date than the walls themselves.

A fine Roman arch, situated much lower down, now serves as one of the modern city gates. The same district contains, moreover, a little church, called Santa Maria di Civita, under the porch of which a dedicatory inscription to Mercurius Lanarius was found, corroborative of a tradition which existed of its being

the site of a temple dedicated to this deity, and that, consequently, the art of manufacturing woollen textures is of very ancient date at Arpino.

This supposition has received additional validity from another inscription, recording the erection of *turres fullonicæ*, in which the cloths underwent the operation of cleansing, refining, and dyeing. Several other spots are shown as venerable in antiquity, among which is the site of Cicero's native dwelling.

The Volscian towns were all emulous of proclaiming Saturn as their original founder; and Arpino, as well as Atina, has advanced a similar claim, as likewise that of possessing the sepulchral monument of this venerable personage.

A certain Clavelli has recorded the discovery of an urn full of ashes, bearing a *Latin* inscription which removes all doubts on the subject.

There is but one fountain at Arpino, and the want of water to assist the machinery of the manufactures, may probably in time depress its commercial importance below that of Isola.

Two sovereigns, Charles III. and his son Ferdinand, have made Arpino their temporary

residence at two very different periods; the former, in 1744, when he was on his way to oppose the Austrians; the second, in 1798, with an army meant to withstand the invasion of the revolutionary French forces.

The houses inhabited by these monarchs are distinguished by having a massive iron chain fixed between the stone posts on each side of the gateway; a custom of ancient origin in this country, and probably intended to record the honour conferred by such illustrious guests.

It has also been regarded as an indication that, after such a distinction, no other visitors should be admitted; but the emblem used is susceptible of other interpretations, rather more humiliating to the hospitality of the proprietors.

Both at Arpino and Isola the women are distinguished for their good looks,— with this difference, that at the last place they preserve the dark and animated character common to the generality of the southern race, while those of Arpino vie in fairness and delicacy of complexion with the natives of our colder regions.

Several agreeable and interesting excursions

may be undertaken from Isola; one of which is to Casa Mari, a name which, added to some indistinct vestiges of ancient constructions, has obtained for the spot the reputation of being the site of a villa belonging to Marius. It is placed at the distance of four miles from Isola, on a road leading to Veroli, (a good Roman town,) which, though much deteriorated, will admit the use of a small or light carriage. The place at present is only remarkable for a convent, which has existed ever since the year 1005; and which, after passing under the different rules of various monastic orders, was finally subjected to that of La Trappe in 1717, to the rigid severity of which it still adheres. The building is large, and offers some curious specimens of ancient Gothic architecture; but the locality has nothing else to recommend it.

The episcopal town of Sora, retaining its ancient name and situation, is about three miles distant from Isola, along an excellent road, which terminates with the valley itself at its gates. Here, the Liris, flowing from a glen of narrower dimensions but considerable length, forms a bend round the city, and is crossed to

gain admittance to it. The place is consequently in a flat, but not unpleasant position; one whole flank being watered by the river, and the hinder extremity resting against an insulated rocky hill, on which are seen the ruins of its Gothic castle, and those of its still more ancient walls.

The dwellings are large, the streets wide and well paved, and the population, apparently easy and industrious, amounts to seven thousand souls. In front of the church a number of inscriptions and sculptural fragments are collected, which attest the identity of the spot, and offer some interest to the antiquary.

It was, like most others in this district, of Volscian origin, but very soon fell under the government of the Samnites, from which it was frequently wrested by the Romans, but to which its inhabitants returned with a pertinacity marked by peculiar inveteracy of hatred against their conquerors. It ended, however, by sharing the fate of all its companions, but continued to retain an importance to which its position and resources justly entitled it.

In modern times it was likewise considered

as a military station and feudal tenure of such consequence as to have been granted successively to powerful families, such as the Cantelini, Picolomini, and Buoncompagni, and has generally borne a conspicuous part in the repeated wars of invasion which afflicted these regions.

Cardinal Baronius, whose ecclesiastical annals are considered as one of the bulwarks of pontifical power, was born in this city.

I went through Sora on my way to the Lago Fucino, and leaving the town by a showy modern gateway, a succession of well cultivated gardens, orchards, and wooded grounds brought me to a second bridge, and to the entrance of the above-mentioned valley, known by the name of Val di Roveto.

This, in general, is narrow, having the stream of the Liris reduced in compass, but improved in quality, flowing in the centre, with some cultivation on either edge, and a ridge of mountains beyond it. This increases in height and irregularity of outline as we advance; the left, or western range, being the most elevated and wooded.

Sometimes a series of fine meadows shaded by spreading oaks recalls English scenery to the recollection of the traveller.

The road is tolerably wide, and, keeping close to the river, is in no part rendered laborious by inequality of level; but the track is very often execrable, especially when any degree of amelioration has been attempted by casting loose stones of considerable size upon a bed of clay, where they stick without being absolutely fixed. The Liris, as well as the numerous brooks which it receives, is crossed so frequently, as to render this operation, whether performed at a ford, or over a rustic bridge, extremely irksome.

There are many mills along the path, and two or three taverns; but all the villages that show themselves are on the heights, and generally two or three miles, and sometimes more, distant from the road. Those on the left, which are the nearest, are Roccavivi, Rendinara, Morino, Civita di Roveto, Canistro, and Pesco Canale: on the right stand, in the following succession, Balzorano, which calls itself a town, San Giovanni, San Vincenzo, Morea, Civita,

d'Antina, and lastly Capistrello. The province of Abruzzo Seconda is entered just under Balzorano, about four miles from Sora.

We stopped to rest our horses, and relieve our own hunger, at a miserable tavern called Morino, from the vicinity of a village of that name, which has an iron foundery worked by a copious stream called Romito, falling into the Liris at the spot where we halted. It forms a fine cascade in the mountains; the distant aspect of which tempted me to undertake the labour of a nearer investigation, which amply repaid the fatigue of a walk of six miles. The path is not arduous, being almost close to the edge of the rivulet on a gradual acclivity. It passes under the hill on which Morino is situated, among some gardens and cultivated grounds; and soon after enters a thick forest of oaks of venerable growth, mixed with a great variety of deciduous trees among which much beech is visible.

The ridge of mountains recedes into a vast amphitheatre, the upper line of which is cloathed with firs, the whole scene having an aspect of peculiar solemnity and solitude.

The principal waterfall, called *Schioppo*, a name which is very generally given to the river itself, is of very considerable height, probably superior to that of Terni, which it much resembles in its snowy appearance, but which it yields to in beauty and abundance of water: it springs from the edge of the rock with great force, forming a considerable curve, and falling at such a distance from the base as to admit a free passage behind it.

There is another cascade near it, of similar form, and competing with it in elevation, but the stream is much less, and indeed the altitude of both produces some deficiency of aspect and effect in that respect; yet they are both so remarkable, that it was a matter of surprise that their existence had never been mentioned till I came into the immediate vicinity.

The second time I traversed these regions, and the only one that I visited the falls, I found the day so far advanced in consequence of this excursion, that, deeming it impossible to arrive at my intended destination before dark, I resolved to seek a night's lodging, and trust to chance for securing it, at some place

in the neighbourhood. The tavern-keeper assured us that Civita d'Antina would afford us this accommodation; and, having despatched our guide a short time before us, we accordingly bent our way towards that village, visible as it was from the banks of the Liris, which it was requisite to cross before we began our journey.

A very steep and rugged path, strewed with rolling stones, brought us to it after three miles of a most toilsome ascent.

Placed at a very considerable elevation on the line of hills that forms the eastern flank of the Val di Roveto, Civita d'Antina ought to enjoy a magnificent view of its whole extension; but most of the houses being built on the side of a ravine facing another more distant and still higher range, they are debarred from this advantage, with the exception of the parish church, and the very dwelling in which we found an asylum for the night.

The place itself presents the appearance of the worst Greek village, composed of mean habitations scattered among masses of rock and sloe-bushes, over the bare and dreary surface of

the bleakest of mountains: among them, or rather before them, stands a well-built modern church, together with a large mansion, the original construction of which, as well as the later additions made to it, attested considerable expense and attention. This was our abode for the night, much superior, as may be imagined, to that I had expected; as the description given by the tavernaro had prepared me for the idea of, at best, a galantuomo's moderate residence, where accommodation might be obtained by paying for it.

Instead of this, we found the proprietor, a Signor Ferrante, apparently accustomed to, and much pleased at, receiving strangers, whom he greeted with the cordiality of an old acquaintance. Immense suites of apartments were displayed, furnished with so much expense and even luxury, that we could not help wondering how marble chimney-pieces, inlaid tables, pictures in handsome gilt frames, and all the less showy, but more useful appendages of carved bedsteads, walnut door-cases, and brass locks, had ever found the means of conveyance to such inaccessible regions.

An interminable series of bed-chambers was opened for our choice, of which we selected the least removed from our host's habitual apartment, composed of a well-furnished drawing-room, and small library adjoining, filled with a respectable collection of books, in which he seemed to take great interest, and from which his conversation proved that he had derived no slender portion of information and profit.

Here, after we declined the refreshments which our recent meal at the tavern rendered superfluous, he ordered a large fire to be lighted; and the surprise which this command excited in travellers who had been toiling up the western flank of a steep mountain on the first of June, was not a little augmented when he added that he found it a most necessary precaution in these elevated regions until the season was farther advanced.

We found, as the evening closed in, that the measure was most salutary, and, on retiring to rest, wished that it had been extended to our apartments, where the beds, placed in rich alcoves at a considerable distance from the windows, and which had neither been occupied, nor

aired for several years, were alarmingly damp, though we rose from them without any unpleasant result.

Antina was a Roman colony, but is supposed to have existed under the same name, at a more remote period, as one of the cities of the Marsi; for Pliny mentions, among the various tribes that composed that nation, the *Atinates*, the letter N having probably been erroneously omitted in the copies of that author.

It retains vestiges of its ancient origin in several portions of polygonal walls, some of which still preserve the form of an entrance or gateway, and serve as such to the modern village, under the appellation of Porta Campanile.

The numerous Latin inscriptions which have been found on the spot, have been all collected by the successive members of Signor Ferrante's family and himself, and are to be seen in excellent preservation in the vestibules of his house, or the garden adjoining it.

They are not without interest, proving that Antina was a place of some importance: this is

exemplified by an inscription raised by the corporated institutions of Centonari, Dendrofori, and Armamentari, who united in dedicating this record to Novius Felix, patron of the municipium of Antina. The traces of a no less curious monument are to be seen on a rock just outside the village, where the outline, but nothing more, of an inscription is visible: a copy of this, taken previously to its having become illegible, is to be found in the collection of the antiquities of Antina, published some years back by a canonico de Sanctis.

It proves to be a sepulchral inscription, in Latin, to a female named Varia Montana by her surviving parents, the tenor of which is elegant and impressive. A mosaic pavement, of very coarse execution, had recently been discovered among some ruins that might be those of some baths.

We quitted the place on the following morning, much pleased with our host's unaffected and instructive conversation, and equally impressed with gratitude for the hospitable treatment we had experienced, after a breakfast

which proved that the merits of good cookery had not been overlooked among the desiderata of his establishment, which, in such a situation, almost appears a problem.

This gentleman was possessed of extensive territorial possessions in the vicinity, as well as at Antina; and the inhabitants of the village appeared to regard him with feelings of submissive respect, which might have led one to believe in the continued existence of vassalage and servitude: the trifling orders which we happened to see him give to some of the natives, though issued in anything but an authoritative tone, were received with a show of almost idolatrous obedience, and executed with a readiness and minuteness that evinced the unqualified habits of submission contracted towards him whom they evidently considered as their master.

A feeling so generally diffused is easily accounted for in a population entirely engrossed by agricultural pursuits, and who see, in the only landed possessor they know, the individual to whom alone they can look for employment, reward, chastisement, or charity.

The impression made upon us was of that nature to induce the belief, that the last-mentioned quality had acted in the most forcible manner on the minds of these people: and I afterwards had the opportunity of learning that the higher authorities of the province apply with greater confidence to the interference of this person for the execution of all municipal regulations, measures of police, and, above all, the exact payment of the taxes, than to any of the salaried and local magistrates.

The view from Mr. Ferrante's house, (the only dwelling in the place that enjoys one,) is very extensive: it embraces, on one side, the whole valley as far as Balzorano, to which, as well as to Sora, a horse-road leads along the side of the mountains, and which probably is better than that I had taken by the river's edge. A magnificent prospect of the rocky amphitheatre round the cascade of Morino, and the fall itself, has much more attractions; but in every other respect it is difficult for the imagination to conceive a more dreary and melancholy position than that of Civita d'Antina.

A smooth path, gradually descending under

some fine oaks along the slope of the hill, led us back to the banks of the Liris, just opposite the village of Civita di Roveto; and an hour's ride more brought us to the extremity of the valley of that name, which terminates in a ravine, but wide enough to admit the contracted channel of the river and a path by its side, which soon opens to another glen of more limited dimensions, called Val di Nerfa, in which the Liris has its origin.

On one side of this defile stands Pesco Canale; and on the other, the larger village of Capistrello, perched on the summit of the mountain bank, which it is necessary to climb in order to reach it, and emerge from the valley in which we had been journeying.

The mouth of the emissary built by Claudius for the dispersion of the waters of the Fucine Lake stands nearly at the top of this acclivity, and just under the village. It presents itself, from the surface of a rock projecting over the river, in the form of a high narrow arch of Roman brickwork, faced with opus reticulatum.

Here we stopped, for the purpose of viewing the interior, in which operation we were accom-

panied and assisted by the chief engineer employed by the government, for whom we had a letter of introduction. A reference to, and some account of, the Lacus Fucinus at this period of my journey, will not, it is hoped, be deemed an ill-timed anticipation, connected, as it naturally must be, with a description of the emissary itself, and I shall therefore offer no apology for the following retrospective digression.

The territory possessed by the Marsi was remarkable in the most remote periods of history, as it is now, for containing the largest lake existing in the southern division of the peninsula, round which a mountainous tract, little favoured by climate or fertility, extends to a limited distance.

After it had become a Roman province, the Emperor Claudius, with that extravagant taste for gigantic enterprises which characterised his reign, but which in this instance might have been directed to some public advantage, undertook to construct an emissary, or channel, which, by carrying off the increasing volume of waters in the lake, might rescue the adjoining

lands from permanent submersion, and restore to cultivation those which had already been inundated.

It appears, from Strabo, Julius Obsequens, and Cicero, that, independently of its gradual and continued augmentation, the lake had been occasionally subject to sudden temporary swells, one of which, under the consulate of M. Emilius and C. Hostilius, absorbed five miles of the surrounding country.

The inhabitants had urged the execution of such a project under the respective reigns of J. Cæsar and Augustus, and had offered to defray the expenses attending it, if the rescued territory was allotted to their use: a consideration of this nature, if we believe Suetonius, seems to have been the principal incentive to Claudius when he finally yielded to their entreaties.

It is difficult to ascertain from the authors who have recorded the event, whether it was intended to drain it entirely, or merely restrain the waters below a certain level; but many modern writers are inclined to believe the former to have been the plan, notwithstanding its im-

probability: be that as it may, the labours which it necessitated were carried on by thirty thousand men constantly at work during eleven consecutive years, and finally brought to a termination in the thirteenth of Claudius's reign.

Dion Cassius says, that the first scheme had been to conduct the waters into the Tiber, which is not so impracticable as it may at first appear to be: a canal would, in that case, have been cut, from the northern extremity of the lake, into the river Telonius, (now Imele or Salto,) which rises at no great distance; and, after assuming a direction which brings it still nearer to the Fucinus, takes a sudden bend, and flows through a valley of forty miles into the Velino, near Rieti. This last, as is well known, after uniting its waters with those of the Nera at the celebrated cascade of Terni, falls into the Tiber.

We are not informed what obstacle presented itself to the execution of this plan, which, from the soft quality of the intervening soil, might have been easier than the other. As it was, the labour consisted of an aqueduct, exca-

vated in the rock, for the space of three miles through a mountain now called Salviano, and running in nearly a straight line to the edge of the Liris under the present Capistrello.

Claudius was so proud of his work, that he determined the epoch which marked its successful completion should be inaugurated in that style of barbaric splendour of which the annals of the first Roman emperors only have furnished examples.

The blood of nineteen thousand gladiators, shed in the hitherto unsullied waters of the lake, was destined to illustrate this memorable event; and Suetonius has recorded their application for mercy, and the mistaken interpretation of the stupid tyrant's reply, which induced them to believe it granted; but he forced them to begin the sanguinary sports, under the semblance of a naval engagement between the Rhodian and Sicilian fleets, the signal for which was given by an artificial Triton who issued from the waves and sounded a silver trumpet.

After this extraordinary exhibition, which was witnessed by myriads of spectators from all

the provinces, collected on the shore and the mountains, the emperor, and his wife Agrippina, clad in the most sumptuous attire, ordered the last impediments to the egress of the waters to be removed; but, either from the first portion of the channel being too shallow, or some other cause which is not specified, the effect did not answer the expectations raised, and the enterprise, in fact, failed.

The works were however resumed; another entrance, on a lower level, was effected; and, after a second gladiatorial feast on the plan of the first, the accumulated mass of waters rushed with such impetuosity into the mouth of the emissary, that it upset all the surrounding objects and boats, shook the adjacent hills by the concussion, and filled the assistants with such dismay as to cause their precipitate flight in all directions: among these, the sovereigns, seated at a banquet on a large wooden platform, had great difficulty in escaping.

This appropriate *denouement* to such a spectacle, with which the narrative of Tacitus concludes, has induced many to suppose that the emissary became useless from that period: but

subsequent authors indicate clearly, in several passages, that it was completed, and answered the purpose intended.

Nero, indeed, seems to have regarded it with indifference; but some of his successors attended to the restoration which this neglect rendered requisite, and an inscription preserved at Avezzano attests that Trajan had been thus employed: Spartian, moreover, mentions in the most unequivocal manner, that Adrian ordered it to be re-opened and cleaned, which fact is likewise recorded by an inscription. During the dark æra which succeeded to the downfall of the Empire, it is not surprising that it was abandoned to its fate, and that it became impervious to the stream; but a document exists, by which it appears that Frederick of Hohen Stauffen, Emperor of Germany and King of the Two Sicilies, a prince far in advance of his contemporaries in genius and enterprise, ordered it, by a special diploma, to be restored to its original destination, by cleansing it of all the earth and rubbish which the lapse of years had caused to accumulate. Since that period, however, no indication is extant of any later

improvement; and it is only under the reign of Ferdinand I, of Bourbon, that the government has turned its attention towards the possibility of amelioration. Some years back, a certain Canonico *Lolli* submitted to the administration a project for cleaning out the passage of the ancient Claudian emissary, and some advance was even made towards this operation; but it was given up, having met with much opposition and counter-plans of new labours in other parts, among which, one recommended the construction of a large navigable canal uniting with the Adriatic: these were, however, in turn abandoned as wild, impracticable theories, or too expensive in their execution; and the plan of re-opening the Roman emissary has been finally approved and adopted.

The works necessary to achieve this undertaking were commenced as far back as the year 1826, when I first visited these regions; the second time, in 1831, they were considerably advanced, considering the paucity of hands employed, and the absence of efficient machinery.

It is but justice to observe, that, although no

great efforts of ingenuity or invention have been requisite to carry them on successfully, considerable judgment and sagacity have been displayed in the operation, and there is every reason to look forward to a favourable result.

Nearly half of the whole length of the emissary has been cleared of the earth and loose materials which had fallen in through the numerous shafts or air-holes, in the shape of circular wells, which mark exteriorly the whole line of the channel; which substances had, by degrees, extended and choked up the passage. The interior construction retains its original form and solidity; it consists in most parts of an arch, excavated in the live rock, about ten feet high and six wide: whenever the stone has failed, which is but rarely, a brick vault of substantial fabrication supplies its place; this had only given way in one instance, and has been replaced by modern masonry in the same manner.

The bottom of the channel is somewhat raised in the centre, to allow the water when not very abundant to be carried off in two streams; but this had been covered, during

the recent labours, by a wooden platform, laid along the whole of the hitherto excavated extension, for the purpose of facilitating the labours and the progress of the sledges used in removing the materials. It also serves to keep the workmen above the level of a rapid stream which fills the lower part of the cavity to the height of about two feet; and, having always been seen to issue from the arch above the Liris, had led to a surmise (apparently not unfounded) that, notwithstanding the obstructions existing in the body of the canal, some portion of the waters of the lake were still able to penetrate through it, and thus found an egress.

The formation of this rill is, however, now obviously to be referred to the abundant filtrations that exude from the rock itself; and in a still greater degree to a fine spring which has been discovered nearly at the termination of the existing labours, which, issuing from the lateral vault into a small reservoir rudely hewn in the limestone at the time of the original construction, bears the marks of having flowed in the same line ever since that period.

Fifteen shafts or air-holes have already been passed; and, whenever a fresh one is attained, it is rendered subservient to the progress of the work, by becoming the channel through which the rubbish is drawn up in buckets or baskets.

These apertures are likewise highly advantageous in admitting light; and, when each is rendered useless by the discovery of the next, it is grated above, or vaulted below, to prevent any fresh intrusion of soil or stones.

Besides these, two wide cuniculi, or passages, have been found, extending to the right and left of the channel, furnished with stone steps which have likewise become serviceable outlets in the prosecution of the undertaking: the dimensions of the arch are apparently larger than necessary for the mere carrying off the superfluities of the lake; but they vary both in height and breadth, and so does the course of the emissary, which not unfrequently takes a strongly marked curve.

The recurrence of numbers carved in the rock might lead one to look for a scale of measurement in Roman feet; but these are

not at regular intervals of distance from each other, and seem engraved at random; the number 'two hundred', being frequently repeated.

Such was the state of the labours in the year 1831; they have been carried on ever since, and are now far advanced towards their final completion.

After quitting the emissary, and passing through the skirts of Capistrello, we entered a high valley, parallel to that of Roveto, but of a very different aspect and nature; being merely a hollow of no very great depth, but considerable breadth, between two sloping banks of such gradual ascent and unbroken surface as to look artificial.

They are, nevertheless, of sufficient elevation to preclude all prospect on either side, which, added to the unbroken monotony of their line, renders the ride of three miles across this flat one of the dullest I ever met with.

The soil, a thin crust of clay on an uneven rocky base, furnishes but scanty encouragement to any kind of cultivation, which consists of meagre crops of thinly sown wheat, while the

sides produce nothing but thistles and a dwarf sort of heath; the only objects that catch the eye being the spiracula, or air-holes, of the emissary, the course of which is clearly to be traced during the whole of the way.

This dreary region may, however, offer a degree of historical interest, being the extremity of the plain known by the name of Piano di San Valentino, or Campi Palentini, stretching some miles to the north as far as Tagliacozzo, on which the sanguinary engagement was fought which deprived the ill-fated Corradino of his crown, and subsequently of his existence. On ascending the opposite bank, I was surprised by the view of the whole expanse of the Fucine Lake, at the foot of the mountain (Salviano) on which I stood. The prospect is impressive; more so, perhaps, from the unexpected way in which it developes itself, than from any intrinsic beauty attached to it.

I must, however, admit the peculiar limpid brightness of its waters, which well deserve the epithet conferred upon them by Virgil:

> Te nemus Angitiæ, vitreâ te Fucinus undâ,
> Te liquidi flevere lacus * *

The general form of this inland sea is oval, with considerable breaks and irregularities in its outline; and it is entirely surrounded by high limestone hills, presenting a bleak and barren surface: nearer the shores some patches of wood and vegetation are visible.

A second range of mountains rising beyond that which borders the lake to the east, is that of the *Maiella,* reputed one of the highest in the kingdom, and at this period (June) still covered with snow.

The nearer prospect was more satisfactory: a little to the left, under my feet, stood the town of Avezzano, about a mile from the water's edge, at the extremity of a wide valley that stretches towards Rieti and the Roman states; beyond it, following the sinuosities of the margin, are several villages in rural and cheerful positions, and the town of Celano, from which the lake has derived its modern name.

Behind Avezzano, a well-defined and detached mass, shaded by trees and adorned by cultivation, is surmounted by the little village of *Alba,* the representative of the ancient *Alba*

Fucensis, whose ruins appear from a great distance, under the two weather-worn and shadowy peaks of the majestic Velino, bearing the second rank in elevation among the Apennines.

CHAPTER V.

Town and Vicinity of Avezzano.—Remains of Alba Fucensis.—Church of Alba.—Origin and Territory of the Marsi.—Snake Charmers.—Dimensions and Water of the Fucine Lake.—Temperature of the Vicinity.—History of Celano.—Lake Boats.—Excursion on the Fucine Lake.—Village of Luco.—Reputed site of Angitia.—Village of Trasaco.—The Ancient Archippe.—Probable site of Maruvium.—Corradino and Charles of Anjou.—Conduct of Clement IV.—Aland de St. Valery.—Rout of Corradino's Army.—Church and Monastery to commemorate the Victory.—Town of Taggliacozzo.—Course of the Imele.

A WINDING and tedious descent brought us to the edge of the lake, and shortly afterwards to the gate of Avezzano, where we found good accommodation in a house, which, though bearing neither the name nor outward sign of an inn, afforded all we could wish.

The town contains three thousand inhabitants, and is not very large; but being seated on a perfect flat, with wide streets and large well-built dwellings, its interior has a respectable appearance.

An ancient substantial building, standing just outside the entrance, recalls to the mind of the spectator the existence of powerful feudality: it belonged to the Colonna family, from which it passed by inheritance to that of the Barberini, both which possess large territories in this district: this mansion, surrounded by a moat, now converted into gardens, and flanked by bulky circular towers, is now inhabited by the agent of the present proprietor.

Besides the Claudian emissary, the neighbourhood of Avezzano offers other objects of interest to the antiquary, in the ruins of Alba, which are easily accessible.

The modern village, which only contains three hundred inhabitants, is on the summit of one of the two peaks which crown the hill; while the remains of the ancient city stand on another, together with a church dedicated to St. Peter.

Alba Fucensis originally belonged to the Marsi; but, after their subjection to the Roman power, it became a place of importance from the natural advantages of its position, and the great strength of its fortifications.

These qualifications induced the Romans to fix upon it as the most eligible residence, or rather prison, for such captives as their tyrannical line of policy doomed to eternal confinement. Among these are numbered Bituitus, sovereign of the Alvernei; Syphax, king of Numidia; and Perseus, king of Macedonia, who, as well as his son Alexander, terminated his days there, after many years of seclusion.

The existing ruins consist of a triple line of walls, each rising above the other, round what was probably the citadel. These are not only of great extent, but constructed in such a manner as to resist with equal success the efforts of man and the ravages of time: the materials in grain and colour are equal to the finest marble; and the blocks, though immensely large and irregular, are so well connected, that they present one of the most perfect specimens of those constructions termed polygonal or Cyclopian.

There are, besides, the basements and openings of three gateways, and a very large substruction, apparently a cistern, or perhaps cloaca; near which were found numerous in-

scriptions, fragments of pavements, and architectural sculptures, and the statues of Scipio and Hannibal, which are to be seen in the Colonna garden at Rome; but previously to these discoveries, a great portion of the marbles of Alba had been employed by Charles of Anjou in the fabrication of a monastery, which he erected at Scurcola, in this vicinity, to commemorate his victory over Corradino.

The church at Alba, above mentioned, occupies the site of a temple which rose from a semicircular base built in the same style, and with the same ponderous materials as the walls.

The interior offers a still more interesting spectacle in the original colonnade, composed of two rows of eight pillars ending in a double portico of four to each, which four are more than half concealed in the lateral walls; the last eight being, moreover, buried in great part by the raised pavement which sustains the choir and altar at this extremity of the edifice; all which circumstances prove that these columns occupy their primæval position.

The building contains, besides, some curious relics of that species of gilt and variegated

mosaic work which has been called Saracenic, Greek, or Norman; a screen, composed of small spiral pillars incrusted with this material, divides the nave from the choir; and a white marble pulpit, fancifully adorned with the same, and enriched with slabs of porphyry and serpentine, present very brilliant specimens of this minute and not inelegant kind of labour.

The nation of the Marsi, whose origin seems to have been enveloped in even a thicker cloud of fabulous obscurity than that of any of the adjacent states, was most likely derived from the Sabines; it would therefore be superfluous, as well as tedious, to enter into a detail of the learned controversies which have taken place, to establish their descendency from Marsius, the son of Circe, from whom they inherited the arts of divination and magic,—from Tyrrhenus, the brother of Lydus, who here established a colony of Asiatics,—or from Marsyas, also a Lydian.

Records of a less questionable nature show them at a less remote period arrayed in hostility against the Romans, somewhat later than the neighbouring federations; then conquered

by them; again relapsing into enmity, followed by a second alliance, during which they proved as strenuous friends as they had been inveterate foes.

The Social War, a contest which, combining the united efforts of all the nations who had successively bent to the Roman yoke, threatened to shake to its foundation the power of the republic, was likewise called Marsian, from having been excited by this restless and warlike tribe; who were esteemed equally formidable from their bodily strength, their valour, and their perseverance.

The tract of country which they inhabited, and which bore their name, offers the only example of the ancient denomination being retained in common use to this very day; while the same limits which bound the district they possessed in the early æra of the Roman commonwealth are observed as those of the Marsian territory in the nineteenth century.

While the feudal lords of the middle ages assumed the title of some individual town, castle, or territory, the possessors of this portion of the kingdom styled themselves, first

Castaldi, and afterwards Counts of the *Marsi*, a rank still enjoyed by the Colonna family. It would appear affected in any one to talk of going into Samnium or Lucania; but an excursion *nei Marsi*, is a proper, and even common-place, mode of expression.

Their towns are distinguished by the same adjunct; and the bishop, who resides at Pescina, instead of deriving the name of his diocese from this town, signs himself *Vescovo de Marsi*.

I hope it will not be deemed a frivolous stretch in favour of identity, to observe, that the present inhabitants of these regions pretend to possess the same occult powers which distinguished their forefathers, in charming venomous reptiles, and rendering them innoxious. In most parts of the Neapolitan dominions they are occasionally to be met with, carrying boxes full of serpents of all sizes and colours, which they display to the gazing multitude; offering at the same time, for a very trifling remuneration, to render the spectators invulnerable as themselves.

I have frequently seen these individuals, in the early days of spring, sitting at Naples on

a sunny parapet, near the sea, exhibiting their collection of reptiles, and collecting apparently no inconsiderable contribution from the curiosity or credulity of the bystanders.

The operation requisite to secure them against the poison of the snake in future, is performed by slightly scratching the hand or arm with a viper's tooth divested of its venom; then applying a mysterious stone to the puncture; and finally furnishing the patient with an image of, and a prayer to, San Domenico di Cocullo, a village among the Marsian hills, where a celebrated sanctuary is every year thronged by pilgrims from all parts of the province; modern devotion having transferred to a sanctified being the attributes which ancient superstition ascribed to dealers in necromancy and divination.

This ceremony is called *ingermare*, a word from which it would be absurd, as some have sought, to derive our expression, "to charm," which undoubtedly springs from *carmen*, a verse or song; but which may more properly be rendered by inoculate, insert, or engraft.

The lake of Celano, or Fucino, is supposed

to measure thirty miles in circumference, and about eight across in its widest part; dimensions which I consider somewhat exaggerated, and to which its utmost general depth, fifty feet, bears no adequate proportion.

Few villages adorn its shores; among which, Ortucchio, placed at the southern extremity, has been the most exposed to the changes and damage caused by inundation,—the spot on which it stands having been, within the memory of man, more than once converted into an island.

Avezzano, at the opposite end, has apprehended the same fate; but though the gradual augmentation of the waters is not to be disputed, there have been periods when a contrary phenomenon has been observed; and when I first visited it in the year 1826, a considerable portion of land had been recovered and restored to cultivation by the proprietors, since which—that is, during five years,—it has been in a decreasing state, so much so as to excite doubts in the minds of the natives whether the expenses bestowed on the cleansing of the emissary might not be more usefully directed.

The water is remarkably clear, and was esteemed by the ancients, as it is now, not only excellent to drink, but salutary in the cure of many disorders.

This may account for an opinion they entertained, that it was under the special protection of a local divinity; a supposition corroborated by the discovery of a votive inscription found at a spot where the river Giovenco discharges itself into the lake, and dedicated to the *Fucinus* as a genius or tutelary deity.

A flat belt, or border, runs along the bank in nearly the whole of its extension, usually of no great breadth; but, being either marshy or covered with shingles, it injures the effect in a picturesque point of view.

Behind this stretches a range of high and precipitous mountains, broken only at the northern extremity by the wide valley behind Avezzano, and on the south-west side by a smaller plain between the villages of Luco and Trasacco.

Beyond this last, the ridge extends its roots into the very waters, and opposes an impediment to the course of pedestrians and horses,

which, but for this, might be carried along the immediate edge of the lake in its whole circuit. The temperature of the flat grounds adjoining the banks is, as may be imagined, much less rigid in winter than that of the surrounding mountains; so that, although the inhabitants of Albe are confined to the interior of their habitations by the snow and frost for several consecutive days, such an occurrence is unknown at Avezzano, only two miles distant, and the lake is seldom frozen beyond its immediate margin: nevertheless, records exist of its having been entirely congealed in the years 1167, 1226, 1595, 1683, and 1726.

The highest mountains rise at the two narrowest extremities: behind Avezzano, the double peak of Velino ranks among the most elevated points of the Apennines; and that of Monte Corbo, and Monte Turchio, on the opposite side, yield but little to it in altitude and fantastic outline. The western range is somewhat flatter; and that which forms the eastern boundary, and divides the Marsi from the valley of Solmona, is not only considerably

lower than the others, but rises at a much greater distance from the water, leaving an intermediate surface of well-cultivated and peopled territory on an inclined plane.

Avezzano, Celano, and Pescina are the principal places, and the only ones claiming the name of towns; the former, though not the most peopled, having the first rank, as Capo Luogo, and the residence of the Sott' Intendente.

Celano is pleasantly situated on a hill which forms one of the buttresses of Mount Velino, about three miles from the lake, of which it commands the whole extent. This elevated position secures to it the advantages of a clearer and more salubrious air; its population is estimated at three thousand souls.

Little is known of its origin; but it has been considered as placed on the site of an ancient town called Cliternia.

The power of its feudal possessors showed itself in an hostile shape against the rule of the Swabian dynasty, whose resentment was testified by Frederick II. in the most formidable manner in the year 1223. This prince not

only sacked and destroyed the town, but sent forth its inhabitants to colonise distant districts in Calabria, Sicily, and even as far as Malta. He established a new population in its ruined walls, and afterwards endeavoured to restore it to the consequence of a town under the name of Cesarea; this, however, in the lapse of years, yielded to the resumption of its original appellation, which in modern times has been attached to the lake.

After this epoch, Celano was considered as a fief of great importance, and successively granted, as such, to several powerful families. It belonged for a considerable space of time to one whose patronymic made way for the title; the heiress of which, Giovanna, or Covella, of Celano, is quoted by Neapolitan historians as a person mournfully celebrated for the vicissitudes of fortune. She had been originally married to a nephew of Pope Martin V. (of the house of Colonna), who wished, through this alliance, to secure to his kinsman the influence and wealth attached to her inheritance.

This union was speedily dissolved by her quitting her husband, without any apparent

reason, and marrying her own nephew, Leonello Acclocciamuro, without waiting for the dispensation of the Holy See. This marriage was productive of a son, Rugerotta, who, when arrived at the age of manhood, persecuted his mother with the most unnatural hostility.

He sided with the Angevine faction, opposed to the Aragonese family who protected the countess; and, succeeded, after a long siege, in making himself master of the town and castle of Celano, in which she had strenuously defended herself for several months. She was cast into a dungeon, and there immured for a series of years; while her son took possession of all her domains, the enjoyment of which was confirmed to him. In the course of time, however, a reverse of fortune restored her to liberty, through the interference of Pope Pius II. (Eneas Silvius); and, after her death, the county of Celano and all its dependencies were conferred on the Piccolomini family, closely related to that pontiff, and greatly favoured by the Aragonese dynasty, who likewise created its head, Antonio, duke of Amalfi. This race possessed it, until its extinction, when the property reverted to the crown.

Mazzella, an author who has written a discursive, but not uninteresting, account of the kingdom, says that Celano gave birth to a monk, whom he denominates Il Beato Tommaso, who, he adds, was the author of those well-known and impressive Leonine verses, sometimes called Sequentia mortuorum, but better designated from their opening lines as *Dies iræ, Dies illa.*

The notice which, of late years, has been bestowed on this portion of the Roman liturgy by several authors, and the felicitous use made of it by Goëthe in his Faust, may render the discovery of its original author a matter of literary interest; but I have never been able to ascertain the grounds of Mazzella's assertion.*

To return to the banks of the Fucinus: Pescina, three miles from its shore, on the eastern side, has three thousand inhabitants, and is the

* Since writing the above, I perceive that the Count C. de Montalembert, whose researches in the study of the ascetic poetry of the middle ages render his opinion of great weight, repeats this assertion in his "Introduction à l'Histoire de Ste. Elizabeth de Hongrie," page lxxxiii; and I regret that the learned author has not thought proper to mention his authority.

residence of the bishop of the Marsi: it, moreover, advances a claim to having given birth to the celebrated Cardinal Mazzarini, whose family was supposed to have emigrated hither from Mazzara, in Sicily.

San Polino, Paterno, San Benedetto, Ortucchio, Trasacco, and Luco, which closes the list of the littoral villages, are all of very circumscribed limits and importance.

The Fucine lake is renowned for the quality of the fish it produces in abundance, but not variety,—consisting of barbel, eels, crayfish, and tench; the first and last sorts grow to an enormous size. Nothing strikes a stranger more forcibly, especially an Englishman, than the scarcity and defective nature of the boats which are in use on all the lakes of the south; and in this respect, the Fucinus is even more unprovided than the lake of Perugia,—the only craft being flat-bottomed punts of different sizes, combining all the disadvantages attached to awkwardness of form and slowness of motion, with the dangers to which the slightest agitation of the waves is likely to expose them.

All these inconveniences I experienced during an excursion which I made round the lake; but which, nevertheless, proved far from deficient in interest and amusement.

Starting from Avezzano early, I embarked at the nearest point which affords the possibility of so doing; the shore is so flat that it was necessary to be carried on men's shoulders into our vessel. This was one of the largest in use, and was formed exactly like a common punt, with two sloping extremities, which served as seats; the perpendicular sides being composed of two planks above one another, so ill connected that the water oozed through the moss stuffed between the interstice whenever it rose above it. The bottom also admitted it so abundantly that it was requisite to bale it out every ten minutes; the rowers, four in number, were all standing up, three in a row on one side, and the fourth at the end on the other, whose paddle acted as a rudder.

Our first station was at the mouth of the emissary, which the gradual decrease of the waters has left uncovered. Having no exte-

rior mark to distinguish it, the mud and stones have covered it so as to render it no longer discernible.

Beyond it, in the flank of the hill, are three subterranean passages, rising one above another, which all lead by a gradual and gentle descent to the main channel of the emissary. These were cleared several years back, when the first attempt to re-establish the Roman works was made, but soon given up: lately, however, on the resumption of the labours at Capistrello, some were undertaken in this part also, which prove that the canal is much deeper and wider at this extremity than the other, but constructed exactly in the same manner. Little progress had been made; and the most interesting discovery that has attended it, is that of a large mass of stalactite formed by the trickling from the vault, which has produced a pillar of about fifteen feet high, and three in diameter, exhibiting in great perfection all the particularities appertaining to similar depositions of water.

It is in contemplation to cut it through at the top and bottom, and transport it, if pos-

sible, to Naples; its removal from its present station will indeed be a matter of necessity when the works are brought to the spot which it now occupies.

Following the banks of the lake, about two miles farther on the same side, stands the village of Luco, containing about fifteen hundred inhabitants, mostly subsisting on the labours of fishing.

Its situation, on a shelving bank, raised above the level of the water, and backed by a screen of jagged hills, is both picturesque and cheerful.

Previous to reaching it, we stopped in a small bight, to see what in the language of the country is called *Le Petogne*, that is, the mouth of a small subterraneous outlet into which the waters disgorge themselves with considerable violence; this has always been known to exist, but is now, from the lowness of the lake, visible on its immediate border.

The water is both seen and heard precipitating itself into this natural emissary, which does not, nevertheless, offer the aspect of a channel or receptacle; but seems to absorb it through

the medium of a coat of gravel and pebbles which fills a cavity of inconsiderable depth, and offers resistance to the hand, or even a stick forced into it, so that the effect produced is rather that of suction than a free fluency. A fanciful tradition is recorded by Pliny and Vibius Sequester, that a river, which entered the Fucinus on the eastern shore, flowed through its waters without mixing with them, precipitated itself into a fathomless abyss on the opposite side, and finally issued again in the Roman territory near Subiaco, where it forms the source of the Acqua Mania, esteemed the best in Rome.

The Abbate Romanelli, struck by the resemblance of the name *Piconius* or *Pitornius*, given by these authors to that river, to that of Petogne, now in use for this natural outlet, has, in his historical topography of the kingdom of Naples, endeavoured to identify them; and corroborates his assertion by a quotation from Lycophron, mentioning likewise a river of the same name in conjunction with the Fucine Lake.

I have not, however, been able to find in

any edition of that poet this name spelt otherwise than *Tithonius;* but the suggestion is to be admitted, especially as the largest among the streams that discharge themselves into the lake called Giovenco, enters it near S. Benedetto, nearly facing the spot called Le Petogne.

A little nearer to Luco, another similar natural emissary is said to exist, but concealed by a cluster of rocks projecting into the water: the noise it makes is, however, audible at some distance; and, when I visited it, the spot was rendered more remarkable by innumerable swarms of snakes that lay basking in the sun on the stones, and sprang into the water on our nearer approach: they could be seen swimming under the surface round our boat, and darting their tongues against it with all the appearance of wrath and violence.

It was impossible not to be reminded of the traditions relative to the charming powers of the ancient Marsi, and the numerous reptiles said to inhabit their country.

The locality also assisted this impression, as the name of Luco is supposed to be derived from the *Lucus Angitiæ,* the mystic grove in

which the inhabitants performed sacrifices in honour of Angitia, the sister of Circe, whom they looked upon as having first taught them the virtues of herbs and simples in healing the bites of serpents, and the power of charming them.

A town, bearing likewise the name of Angitia, is said to have existed here; and the remains of antiquity which are to be found, seem to corroborate the fact. These consist of polygon walls of good construction, and well preserved, under a Gothic church, standing on a pretty wooded bank at a short distance from the village. Below it, close to the water's edge, a line of substructions, composed of fine large blocks, stretches to some distance, having the appearance of a landing-place or quay, and probably serving for that purpose to the ancient city that rose above it, which, if called Angitia at a more remote æra, bore the name of Penna in the early centuries of Christianity. Several Latin inscriptions, found about this spot, have been collected in the village itself.

Trasacco, the next, but much inferior in

size and position, is situated about six miles farther, at the foot of the ridge of hills forming the boundary of a well-cultivated valley that extends in a south-east direction behind Balzorano and Sora: beyond this, as I have before observed, the cliffs rise almost perpendicularly out of the water, and preclude all communication that way between Trasacco and Ortucchio, which is therefore carried on by a path over the mountains.

The population of Trasacco does not exceed the number of seven hundred; and it has no claim to antiquity, though a large collection of inscriptions, friezes, cornices, and other fragments of Roman sculpture, indicate the existence of some ancient city in the vicinity. These are incrusted on the front of one of the best houses in the place, near the principal church; and another near it exhibits a modern inscription, which, by recording its proprietor's relationship (through females) to the celebrated Cardinal Baronius, author of the Ecclesiastical Annals, shows the estimation attached to this dignitary's character.

The only remarkable object in this village is

a very high round tower, growing out of a square one,—a work of the middle ages. A spot between Trasacco and Ortucchio, called Arciprete, has been looked upon by antiquaries as that on which stood *Archippe*, a very ancient city, founded, according to Pliny on the authority of Gellianus, by Marsyas, king or general of the Lydians, and engulphed in the lapse of time by the increasing waters of the lake.

The resemblance of names first gave probability to this surmise, which, however, Lucas Holstenius says has a better foundation in the remains of ancient edifices which are still to be seen on the edge and under the shallows of the water.

The advanced hour of the day, and the aspect of impending bad weather, compelled me to forego the opportunity of visiting it; and I proceeded across the lake straight from Trasacco to S. Benedetto on the opposite shore, an operation which employed two hours of stout rowing.

The view of the landscape behind Ortucchio is the finest (that of Celano excepted) which

presents itself along the whole extension of the margin.

A large forest of oaks appears to cover the whole of the gradual slope which intervenes between the bank and the mountains, and these rise in successive and fantastic ranges to a very considerable elevation; while from the ravines and glens that open from their base, several inconsiderable, but not unperceived streams, find their way to the lake through the trees and cultivated grounds. On the reverse of one of those pinnacles stands the little town of Gioia, above the source of the Sangro, whose inhabitants, above two thousand in number, have adopted the singular custom of emigrating during the winter months to a village called Mannaforno, four miles nearer the water, which, from its sheltered situation, affords them the possibility of getting through the rigid season with a degree of ease and comfort which the local position of their birth-place, from its extreme coldness, entirely precludes from its precincts.

S. Benedetto, where I landed, is a village of but few houses scattered along the eastern

bank, and irrigated by several streams drawn from the Giovenco, the most considerable of those that feed the lake. After passing close to the town of Pescina, two miles inland, it enters the Fucinus a little to the south of S. Benedetto, near a village called Venere.

The ancient city of Maruvium, one of the most eminent among the Marsi, according to Silius Italicus, is supposed to have existed at this spot.

It obtained in the early periods of Christianity, the appellation of Marsia, or Civitas Marsicana, and became the seat of the bishop, whose spiritual jurisdiction extended over the whole district. The remains of a church dedicated to Santa Sabina are those of its cathedral, the honour and title of which have been transferred to Pescina.

Near this ruin some inscriptions have been found of the time of Septimius Severus, and several shapeless masses of brick masonry indicate the existence of a Roman establishment, among which the very imperfect vestiges of a theatre may be traced.

Close to the water, others exist of a more

decided character; one of which might have been an arch, while another bears the aspect of a sepulchral monument of pyramidical form.

Here the wind had increased in so contrary a direction to our course homewards, and the swell occasioned by it was so strong, as to induce me to quit our clumsy, and, at the same time, frail vessel, and trust to our legs for our return to Avezzano.

We luckily met a countryman returning from market with some mules, who for a very trifling remuneration allowed us the use of them; an assistance which considerably alleviated the tediousness of a journey of eight miles through a flat uninteresting tract, the dull dreariness of which was by no means adequately compensated by a few heaps of brickwork denoting Roman monuments.

This is undoubtedly the ugliest portion of the country surrounding the lake; the plain is of considerable dimensions, and gradually rises towards the ridge which divides it from that of Solmona. A tolerable carriage-road leads to that last town from Avezzano, by the villages of Cerchio and Colle Armelo, previous

to ascending the chain of hills which it traverses at a pass called Forca Carosa.

The prospect of Celano proved of some relief to our wearied attention, beautifully placed as it is, about four miles from the shore, at the opening of a woody glen, on a height boldly detached from another picturesque insulated mountain, one of the roots of Velino.

The town of Tagliacozzo is placed about eight miles from Avezzano, in another valley called Piano di San Valentino, or Campi Palentini, in which the noted battle occurred which sealed the fate of the ill-fated Corradino in the year 1268.

E la da Tagliacozzo
Ove senz' armi vinse il vecchio Alardo.

Dante.

No event in the annals of the middle ages has elicited more interest from posterity than this engagement, on which hung the destiny of the last scion of the Swabian race.

The majority of Charles of Anjou's subjects were already as wearied by his rapacious exactions, as they were galled by his iron sway; and the result of this contest, had it proved

favourable to the German prince, would probably have been followed by the voluntary submission of the whole kingdom to his rule.

The Norman line, to which the natives of the two Sicilies appear to have borne a great attachment, might be considered as extinct, and the contending rivals be looked upon as foreigners; but the younger aspirant had on his side a direct descendency from that warlike dynasty, and a more intimate connexion with that of Stauffen, a family who had wielded the sceptre of these realms with glory and success.

The right of inheritance was his; and it might even be contended that, although the Roman pontiff had lent the powerful sanction of investiture to the usurper's successful efforts, and had publicly deposed and excommunicated his former antagonist, the youth of the legitimate heir, and the comparative obscurity in which his earlier days had passed, had shed a kind of oblivion on his existence altogether, and screened him from any sign of papal reprobation, until he put forth his dormant claims, and marched towards the kingdom of

his ancestors to establish them by force of arms.

It should be observed that the pope who had invested Charles with the kingdom of Naples, was no longer in existence at this period, and that his successor, Clement IV, though on terms of the most friendly nature with him, appears rather to have acted the part of an indifferent and impartial spectator, than of an active and useful ally; for the pretended observation of the holy father, that he looked upon Corradino as a lamb going to the slaughter-house, is founded on no better authority than his reputed reply to Charles—*Vita Corradini mors Caroli*, &c.—which have both been cited by the Guelphic chronicles to vindicate the most iniquitous and inhuman sentence ever recorded in history. The youth of this prince, and his education in a remote and comparatively barbarous country, have disabled all contemporary authors from establishing any estimate, or leaving any authentic account of his character, or the promises it might have held forth.

Some German writers have recorded him as

the last of the Troubadours; which circumstance, together with the adventurous result of his expedition, and some affecting traits of magnanimity in the last hours of his limited existence, are all that has reached posterity: but it is not unfair to surmise that, had he been successful and restored to the throne of his forefathers, his submission to the holy see would in all probability have secured him its approbation and protection; and the re-establishment of the house of Swabia on the throne of Naples might, by extending a new and more enlightened influence in the peninsula, have entirely changed the internal organisation of its political system.

The military talents of Charles of Anjou were incontestably superior to those of his inexperienced antagonist; but it is evident nevertheless from contemporary authorities, that his forces were less numerous, and his position so perilous, that nothing but the support he expected from the city of Aquila enabled him to look forward with any degree of confidence to the chances of the impending contest.

There exists a curious account of a noctur-

nal expedition over the mountains, which he undertook from his own camp, in order to ascertain the fidelity of its inhabitants, which was promptly manifested, not only by their assurances, but by considerable supplies of provisions for his troops, which they transmitted to him along the same direct but difficult line of conveyance. Shortly after his return to the army, the hills above Alba were seen covered with women and children who had voluntarily imposed upon themselves the labours of beasts of burden, to relieve the scarcity which threatened destruction to the royal army.

The success of this eventful conflict has been ascribed by all contemporary records to the counsels and directions of an ancient French knight, named Alard de St. Valery, who had stopped at the court of Charles of Anjou on his way from Palestine to his native country. His hesitation in employing the resources of his military experience against Christian troops after fighting all his life against infidels, was overruled by the subtle reasoning of Charles and his followers, who argued that Corradino and his forces having all been excommunicated

could no longer be regarded within the pale of the Catholic church. A body of reserve, headed by the king himself and his venerable adviser, kept aloof from the remainder of the army, who speedily yielded to the superior strength and numbers of their Transalpine assailants; and while these last, after what they considered an easy and complete victory, were giving themselves up to the pillage of the camp, or disbanding themselves in an irregular pursuit of the vanquished, the former, by a judicious and unexpected attack, succeeded in routing them entirely after an immense slaughter, from which their prince escaped only by flight, accompanied by his cousin, Frederick of Austria, or rather Baden, and very few followers.

The circumstances of his seizure on the shore of the Pomptine marshes, his imprisonment, trial, and execution, are two well known to need detailed recapitulation.

To commemorate the favourable issue of this engagement, Charles erected, at Scurcola, near the spot where it had taken place, a church and monastery, under the appropriate invocation of Santa Maria della Vittoria, which he pro-

fusely endowed with extensive territories, and adorned with all the splendour and magnificence compatible with the architectural taste of the age he lived in. We are informed, moreover, that the massive fragments of elaborate sculpture, which in those days still existed in the neighbouring city of Alba, were torn from their original position to decorate this edifice; which was submitted to the rule of the Cistercian order, then, and ever after, to be exclusively composed of monks of French name and birth.

The image which gave the monastery its title, and, according to the superstitious tenets of the age, constituted its most precious attribute, was likewise brought from France; a circumstance which strongly illustrates the marked attachment which the conqueror bore to his native country, and the haughty disregard he had ever manifested towards those realms of which the chances of war and the fiat of a pontiff had rendered him the sovereign.

This monastery continued to be greatly favoured by the successors and descendants of Charles; and in the course of time it became

no less noted for its extensive jurisdiction and princely revenue, than celebrated for the sanctity as well as the learning of its occupants, who had formed a collection of chronological manuscripts and other valuable literary records, which placed its archives on a par with those of Nonantola and Novalese in Upper Italy, those of Farfa and Fossa Nova in the Roman States, and the venerable collections at Monte Cassino, La Cava, S^ta^ Sofia of Benevento and S. Vincenzo ad Volturnum, in the Neapolitan domains. The downfall of this establishment is generally ascribed to an earthquake which occurred about the middle of the fifteenth century; but it is not improbable that, though the building might have suffered considerably at that time, it was only finally suppressed and reduced *ad commendam* when the successful and permanent establishment of the Hispan-Austrian line on the throne of Naples restored to all its institutions a more national character, and probably caused the dissolution of a community entirely composed of foreigners.

The ceaseless feuds of the Colonnas and Orsinis, which, though originating in their native

country, occasionally extended their influence into other parts of Italy, and raged with peculiar animosity in these regions, terminated, after many vicissitudes, by securing a great portion of the district to the first of these distinguished families. The consequence was, that its name has repeatedly figured in the catalogue of the abbots of Scurcola, and bishops of the Marsi. The monastery fell by degrees from desertion to dilapidation; and its more valuable ornaments were carried away to Rome, where it is surmised that the rare manuscripts, chronicles, and perhaps classical desiderata, contained in its archives, are now obscurely reposing in those belonging to that illustrious house.

The image from which the abbey took its name was deposited in a small chapel in the town of Scurcola; which afterwards obtained the same appellation, and where it may to this day be viewed in the identical wooden frame studded with golden *fleurs-de-lis* which formed its original receptacle.

A carriage-road, in many parts very unworthy of such a distinction, establishes a communication between Avezzano and Tagliacozzo;

it runs through a little village called Capelle, about two miles from the lake, and afterwards through Scurcola: this last is placed on the lower declivity of a steep hill with an old castle upon it; and its lower extremity, through which the road is conducted, exhibits some houses, the architecture of which, as well as the sculptured ornaments attached to them, are very remarkable: the country between it and Tagliacozzo is flat and ordinary, but well cultivated, and watered by the Imele; the produce consisting of aniseed in abundance, hemp, flax, potatoes, Indian corn, and beans, but no wheat.

The villages of Curcumela and Villa are seen on the slope of the opposite range of mountains which divides the Palentine fields from the Val di Nersa.

Tagliacozzo is a substantial and flourishing-looking town of about four thousand inhabitants, the lower skirts of which touch the plain, at the opening of a deep and precipitous gulley intersecting the hill on which the remaining portion is placed. The river Imele gushes out in a copious stream from this cleft, and after

irrigating all the gardens and orchards in front of the town, runs towards Villa; and then making a sudden curve, under the opposite hills, issues from the Campi Palentini, into the wider plain behind Avezzano, under Scurcola, near which it is crossed. Here, the general aspect of the land is such as to cause some surprise that it does not flow into the lake, which it approaches within little more than a mile; but, on the contrary, assuming another bend, it takes a north-west direction, and, after changing its name to that of *Salto* in the mountains of Cicolano, it finally falls into the Velino, above Rieti, after a course of about forty miles.

This stream has generally been looked upon by topographers and antiquaries as the ancient Telonus or Telonius, whose banks became celebrated in the Social War for the defeat and death of the Consul Rutilius and eight thousand of his troops.

Cluverius, however, has assigned this mournful honour to another river, the Torano, which rises not far from the first, near Carsoli, and,

observing a nearly parallel course, flows likewise into the Velino near Rieti.

Of the Imele, I hope it is not presumptuous to observe, that Virgil probably alluded to it in the following lines:

> Qui Nomentum urbem, qui rosea rura Velini,
> Qui Tetricæ horrentes rupes, montemque Severum;
> Casperiamque colunt, Forulosque, et flumen *Himellæ*.
>
> VIRGIL, lib. vii.

The line of country mentioned in these verses, beginning from the rosy glades of Velinus, would seem to identify the modern and ancient river, even without the assistance afforded by the similarity of names.

The whole of the district surrounding Tagliacozzo, including the banks of the lake, appertained once, as a portion does now, to the family of Colonna, whose chief bore the high-sounding titles of Duke of Tagliacozzo, Count of the Marsi, feudal Lord of Avezzano, Alba, Capistrello, &c. &c. &c. The same may be said of almost all the Marsian territory, which belongs to this day to the various patrician Roman houses of Barberini, Ceserini, and Bovadilla.

CHAPTER VI.

Phlegmatic Character of the Inhabitants of Abruzzo.—Otra di Verecchie.—Village of Cappadocia.—Sources and Course of the Liris.—District and Identity of Cicolano.—Return to Avizzano.—Castle of Celano.—Church of Valle Verde.—Rocca di Mezzo.—Monte Corno.—Ruins of Castle of Ocra.—City and Inhabitants of Aquila.

At Tagliacozzo I procured horses, an operation which the slow movements of the natives retarded in a most provoking manner. The inhabitants of Abruzzo, though considered a hard-working laborious race, appear totally insensible to that avidity towards gain which characterizes those of the southern districts, and which supplies in some degree the deficiency of better regulated habits of speculation and industry: this, I apprehend, is attributable to a constitutional slowness of organs, both physical and mental, which assimilates them to

some portions of our northern tribes, and renders an intercourse with them in the ordinary matters of life far from agreeable.

They seem indifferent to, or unable to comprehend, the casual advantages derivable from any bargain or labour to which they have not been daily accustomed.

Thus, although the market-place was full of horses and mules which had performed their diurnal office, and were probably destined to return to their respective residences in the neighbourhood in a short space of time, it was with the utmost difficulty that the owners could be persuaded to allow the use of two of them for a compensation far beyond the usual earning of a day's work; and when at last an agreement had been entered upon to that intent, the embarrassment, and even reluctance, testified by them in furnishing us with the necessary accoutrements for mounting the animals, obliged my servant to seek for and procure them without their farther assistance.

My object was to proceed to Cappadocia, a village about four miles distant from Tagliacozzo, situated in the most remote and inac-

cessible part of the chain of mountains confining the Roman territory. The path, as may be supposed, was extremely arduous, passing over a succession of rugged stony tracts offering no interest or attraction, excepting the singular wildness which characterized them, and some curious specimens of indigenous plants, among which, one, apparently of the orchis tribe, was very remarkable from its peculiar height, beautiful colour, and fragrant citric odour.

Whenever an inconsiderable space of vegetable soil shows itself among these rocky recesses, it is cultivated with great care and assiduity; and I observed some ploughmen so employed in spots whose situation rendered it a matter of wonder how the oxen and the implements they drew could ever have been brought there.

After reaching the summit of the slopes that rise behind Tagliacozzo, we began to descend on their reverse into a small valley of somewhat less desolate aspect, between strata of limestone that occasionally stretch to a considerable distance in the semblance of gigantic

but regular walls. The opposite bank is covered with fine forests, at the foot of which, in a pleasant Alpine situation, stands the village of Verecchie, of about three hundred inhabitants: here several springs, gushing from a mossy bank, form an abundant stream, which flows across the glen towards the steep rocky ridge I had descended; where, after a short course of less than a mile, it precipitates itself in a cataract of no great depth, into a broad low cavern, the subterraneous windings of which can be followed by the eye till the foaming flood tumbling through them is lost in darkness.

A belief has been established in the country that this is the same river which rises in the ravine of Tagliacozzo under the name of Imele, but I could never ascertain on what basis it has been founded; if so, its underground course must extend at least for three miles.

Leaving this spot, called Otra di Verecchie, to our left, we mounted a gentle acclivity, from the summit of which the prospect of the Val di Nerfa displayed itself suddenly under our feet, with the Liris, a narrow but copious

brook, tumbling in silver cascades on a rocky channel along the sinuosities of this beautiful dell; the commencement of which is formed by a semicircular assemblage of fantastical hills bounding a deep ravine, on one side of which stands the village of Petrella, and on the other, to the right, that of Cappadocia. This last place, whose Oriental appellation could never be accounted for, is situated at the most elevated extremity of a rocky projection which supports all its habitations; but is itself so detached from the mass of the mountain, so weather-worn at its base, and so overtopped at its apex, that its appearance from all points produces uneasiness, if not alarm. The population, consisting of about eighteen hundred, are poor, but healthy and good-looking; the territory producing nothing esculent but chestnuts, renders them dependent on remote districts for the principal means of subsistence, which they receive in exchange for cheese and other lacteal produce, which the fine pasturage in the surrounding mountains furnishes in great perfection and abundance: but the winters are long as well as rigid, and confine them for se-

veral months to the inner precincts of their walls.

A zigzag path down a perilous declivity brought me to the object of my day's journey, placed about a quarter of a mile below the village; and it amply compensated all past difficulties and fatigues.

Imagination can picture to itself nothing more beautiful than the humble and unknown sources of the Liris: they spring in several distinct founts from the precipitous side of a conical mass of limestone-rock, and unite at its base in a circular basin, hewn by the hand of Nature; which receives likewise a more considerable supply from a cascade of greater elevation, issuing from a cavity dividing the above-mentioned hill from another of exactly the same form: both these are covered with shrubs, and all the picturesque appendages of a damp but luxuriant vegetation, waving and trailing over the little recess which receives the united waters. These soon form another cataract of greater elevation and volume, precipitating itself with considerable force from a ridge of rocks in front of a deep cave, into which, like

that at Moriño, it is easy to gain access, and stand behind the fall.

Both these appear to realise the brilliant fictions of Greek mythology,—the one as the residence, the other the bath, of the tutelary naiad of the mountain stream. This, after a short space of less rapid course, during which it furnishes large and well-flavoured trout, takes a sudden bend under Cappadocia, and, following the direction of the glen, runs in nearly a straight line to Capistrello, near which it forces itself through the narrow and precipitous defile which leads from the Val di Nerfa to that of Roveto.

A path of communication between the two villages, conducted along the immediate banks of the stream for the distance of about four miles, would prove, from Avezzano, a much shorter road than the one I had chosen; but I must have gone over a portion of beaten ground, and could not have used a carriage at all: as it was, I resumed my way to Tagliacozzo, and from thence to my resting-place.

The river Salto, or Imele, flows through a district which deserves more notice than its

remote situation has hitherto allowed antiquaries to bestow upon it till within a very short period back, when an inhabitant of the region itself, by name Martelli, has written a work upon it, and an English traveller thoroughly investigated it, with the intention (it was hoped) of communicating the result of his researches to the public.

The lamented death of this individual, Edward Dodwell, Esq. well known in the annals of archaiology, has probably removed to a distant epoch the communication of his valuable labours; and will possibly render my observations on the subject more acceptable, if not more worthy of approbation.

This tract is known by the name of Cicoli, or more commonly Cicolano: it extends for a considerable way along the banks, or within a short distance, of the above-mentioned stream in a north-western direction, and consists of several villages situated very near each other, and generally containing little more than three or four hundred inhabitants, forming in the whole a population of about thirteen thousand souls. The natives of these, like those of most

mountainous regions in these latitudes, are solely occupied with the labours relating to the management of cattle and their pasture.

The peculiar formation of the country, divided into long, narrow, but very steep ridges, offering in their openings parallel ravines, furnishes scarcely any portion of level surface adapted to the purpose of agriculture; while an universal clothing of thick forests oppose still greater impediments to any kind of cultivation: these consist chiefly of chestnut-trees, and to their produce the inhabitants look for the principal means of subsistence with a feeling of reliance and security which frequent failures in the crop prove to be ill-founded.

These glens unite with each other at spots where the slender rills that flow along them have worn a passage through the lateral boundary, and all finally pour themselves into the Salto; which seems, nevertheless, to derive but slight augmentation from these supplies, continuing to all appearance a very insignificant stream till within a very short distance of its junction with the Velino.

The villages are mostly placed on the sum-

mit of the hills, from which the surrounding prospects are agreeable though unvaried: the number of habitations that show themselves in all directions, embosomed in masses of trees shading slopes of the finest herbage, give to the whole district a pastoral aspect of considerable beauty. But, notwithstanding the proximity of these villages to each other, the communication between them is usually a tedious and even fatiguing operation, in consequence of the steepness of the gullies that intervene, and which it is always requisite to cross; so that, after the first favourable impression produced by fine turf and umbrageous groves, the effect of a long ride through this interminable labyrinth of dell and forest is wearisome, and even oppressive to the mind and spirits.

The line of distance described by the course of the Salto from the point where it assumes a northern direction, to that of its junction with the Velino, measures about thirty miles; but the deviations of the stream add at least one third more to it, and little more than half this space is strictly comprised in the district, or, as it is sometimes termed, the Vicariato of Cicoli,

the spiritual jurisdiction of which falls under the episcopal see of Rieti in the Roman states.

The commencement of this region may be fixed, on the south side, at the village of Sant' Anatolia, about eight miles from Avezzano; and here the first vestiges of Cyclopian walls, which with other constructions of the same nature, are scattered through the whole extension of Cicolano, may be seen: these remains, so numerous, and so unvaried in their character, point it out as the seat of many populations of the most remote antiquity, under the different denominations of Aborigines, Siculi, and Equicoli.

The resemblance existing between the present name of *Cicoli* and the second of those appellations, has indeed afforded one of the principal grounds of identity between the ancient and modern locality; but there exist perhaps better authorities in the account of these faintly-remembered colonies transmitted to posterity by Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

This author, alluding to the aboriginal occupiers of Italy, mentions a series of their cities, (nearly all destroyed when he wrote,)

extending from Rieti towards the Fucine Lake; among which are enumerated Lista, considered as the capital, Palatium, Trebula, Vesbola, Suna, and Tora or Tiora.

The distance from Rieti to this last-mentioned place accords exactly with that to Sant' Anatolia; and when, in corroboration of this coincidence, are added such names as Torano, Tora, and Castora, now attached to several adjoining spots, and finally the martyrdom of the saint herself, which, in various Martyrologia, is asserted to have occurred at Tyria, Thyrum, or Thora, it requires no great stretch of ingenuity to establish the fact of topographical identity.

Dionysius says that Tora was celebrated for an oracle of Mars, not very dissimilar to that of Dodona, which was delivered by a dove from an ancient oak; whereas this proceeded from a woodpecker seated on a wooden column.

In a garden adjoining the church of Sant' Anatolia, placed below the village of the same name, there is a portion of finely executed polygon walls which might have belonged to the peribolus of the mystic fabric containing

the oracle; and a few hundred yards farther another is seen on an elevation, much inferior in size and materials, which might have appertained to the city itself.

About four miles distant, a larger village, called Borgo Colle Fegato, claims the distinction of capo luogo of this division of Cicolano; another, named Mercato, bearing the same rank in the second or northern part of the district: one is the residence of the inspector of police, the other that of the judge.

I had found no possibility of procuring any letters of recommendation at Avezzano, which might have ensured the accommodation and assistance requisite in an excursion to the glen of the Salto; and indeed could not even find any guide that had ever penetrated farther into it than Sant' Anatolia on that side, or I should undoubtedly have shaped my journey that way, which would have afforded more advantageous means of investigation than I obtained in a subsequent tour I made into Cicolano from Aquila.

I was therefore compelled to rest satisfied with a morning's ride to Sant' Anatolia, and

back; which however, independently of the antiquities above described, was by no means without attraction.

The road, which, for five miles northward of Avezzano, is smooth, and wide enough for a carriage, runs between Scurcola on one side, and the large well-situated village of Magliano on the right. This last is nearly under the hill of Alba, and is remarkable for its flourishing appearance and the number of large and even elegant villas that surround it.

The Salto, which in these parts is still called Imele, or sometimes Fiume di Tagliacozzo, flows near the road-side, and with it enters a defile which grows gradually narrower as the mountains seem to rise and crowd upon it, leaving however sufficient space for cultivation under some stately oaks, and one or two farm-houses; after which, nothing can be more solitary than the rest of the way, till, leaving the stream, and winding under the base of a rocky hill, the villages of Torano, S. Stefano, and Sant' Anatolia look down upon one from very elevated stations.

I returned by a straighter, but more uneven

route, which led over the mountain, and by a little village called Rosciolo, to Magliano, and so to my abode at Avezzano, which I was to quit the following morning.

This was not without regret; for the comfortable accommodations I had enjoyed in the house, which, for a second time, I inhabited in that town, and the satisfactory, though not entirely gratuitous attentions I received from its worthy proprietors, induced me to seek for plausible excuses for prolonging my stay: to these recommendations were added the general demeanour and apparent good-will of the inhabitants, and a feeling of placid tranquillity diffused over the adjacent locality, which gained singularly on the mind and habit during even the limited abode of a few days.

The immediate environs of the town are, nevertheless, far from offering any picturesque beauty; the situation being so low as scarcely to admit a view of the lake, except from the upper windows of the houses, and the country is entirely flat: but the vast expanse of turf, the green lanes bordered with honeysuckles, and other circumstances more easily felt than

described, probably recalled the scenery of less meridional regions, and brought with them the fresher impressions of life, tempting one to exclaim with Petrarch,

> Sento l'aura mia antica, e i dolci colli
> Veggio apparir, &c.

The interior of Avezzano, though well built, has nothing remarkable, except, perhaps, the dress of the females, which is peculiarly neat and becoming.

I quitted it for Aquila, on horseback; having sent back the carriage which had been procured from Solmona to convey me there. I preferred a shorter, though perhaps a more fatiguing journey, and took my way accordingly along the banks of the lake for about the distance of three miles; when, leaving the main road, we struck into another to the left, leading to Celano, through cultivated grounds and cherry orchards, forming a little valley, inclosed by wooded banks, watered by a clear and copious mountain stream that runs into the lake.

The landscape is equal in beauty to any Italian scenery I ever saw, and its effect con-

siderably improved by the aspect of the town of Celano and its stately castle, crowning, as usual, the eminence on which it stands, with the whole expanse of the lake stretching in the background, and bound by its fantastic belt of mountains.

The castle of Celano, which had existed probably from the times of the Lombards, received considerable additions, and assumed its present shape, through the care and munificence of Leonello Acclocciamuro, who in right of his wife, the countess whom I have already alluded to, became possessed of the large domains attached to it.

It was in the year 1450 that this nobleman expended on its repairs and augmentations the sum of 600,000 ducats, which even in these days would seem exorbitant.

The Piccolomini family, who obtained a grant of the estates after their confiscation under the Aragonese dynasty, likewise added to this structure; and at subsequent periods it received garrisons from the different powers who by turns disputed the possession of these territories.

To the devotion and liberality of the same Leonello is due the foundation of a church and monastery, beautifully situated in the glen above mentioned, near a spring of limpid water, which had given the spot the appropriate name of Valle Verde, afterwards conferred on the convent, and which it still retains.

The Piccolomini likewise enriched and enlarged this community; and one of them, in the sixteenth century, bestowed upon it an invaluable gift, in an exquisite painting, by Giulio Romano, representing our Saviour's progress towards Calvary.

This nobleman, whose name was Inigo, brought that distinguished artist from Rome to Celano on purpose to adorn his family chapel in this church with the labours of his pencil, which are still to be seen in excellent preservation.

A great portion of these fiefs were sold by the Piccolomini to the Peretti family, from whom they were transferred in later years to the Sforza Bovadilla. The present possession of the castle is now disputed by this last, and the family of Torres of Aquila.

Leaving this lovely valley with all its attractive accompaniments, and turning our backs upon the lake, we ascended a narrow ravine, breaking into the mountains we were to traverse.

The village of Sant' Iona on the left, and that of San Potito on the right, might be considered as offering specimens of the worst situations that can be selected for human abodes, if that of Ovindoli, which follows, did not even surpass them in difficulty of access and dreariness of position.

It is stuck on the projection of a barren rock, over a narrow defile through which the path we followed leads to an extensive flat on the summit of this range.

The wind, that rushed with alarming violence and bitter intensity of coldness through this pass, gave a most feeling insight into the horrors of the wintry season in such a spot.

The plain that follows, though cultivated in some parts, offers an aspect of chilling nudity and poverty, resembling at the same time all those placed in similar localities, viz. the Simplon, Splügen, and Mont Cenis; the surround-

ing peaks being entirely covered with snow. The village of *Roverè* stands on the left; and the next, called Rocca di Mezzo, was our resting-place after a tedious ride of about twelve miles: here, a tavern, which, from possessing two bed-rooms in addition to the ordinary kitchen, deserved the title of *Locanda*, received us; and we made a tolerable repast of some slices of veal, a meat for which this place is celebrated throughout the province.

It contains about eleven hundred inhabitants, and possesses the remains of walls, and a fortified castle, which, owing to its position in the mountain pass between Aquila and the lake, was considered in days of yore as a strong military hold; the annals of the province record several obstinate attacks, and even sieges, which it successfully withstood. On quitting Rocca di Mezzo, another half of the melancholy plain must be travelled over; leaving a village called Rocca di Cagno, the very counterpart of the former, on the left, about two miles farther.

After this, a woodland region is entered, interspersed with large masses of grey rock, lead-

ing to the upper extremity of the range of hills that forms the western boundary of the plain of Aquila; and here, among the underwood, I found large thickets of gooseberry bushes growing wild, loaded with fruit; and I was informed that in many other parts of Abruzzo they abound, and produce a variety of sorts of various flavour, size, and colour, which, however, are held in no estimation by the natives.

On reaching the crest of the hills, the whole plain and the city of Aquila were visible; and Monte Corno, probably derived from the *Cunarus* of the ancients, showed itself towering at a great elevation above the opposite chain, and adding a very imposing feature to a prospect which, though extensive, is neither attractive nor even striking. This mountain, the highest of the Apennines, is usually designated by the more classical, and as appropriate, name of Gran Sasso d'Italia. The road all the way from Avezzano to this point is so smooth and wide, that, except in two or three places, it would be quite practicable for a carriage; but the descent into the plain is along

a zigzag path, so steep, rugged, and in every other respect perilous, that I thought it advisable to trust to my own legs instead of my horse's, and performed it on foot.

Many rills rush down these declivities, and on approaching their base, several large well-built villages appeared, scattered along the whole line, many of which occupied very agreeable positions.

Among the many ruins of old castles which generally form an addition to most of them, the remains of that of *Ocra* are remarkable from the immense circuit of the encircling walls, and the number of towers with which they are furnished.

This adjunct distinguishes several of the neighbouring villages, such as S. Felice, S. Martino, and Santa Maria d'Ocra: from the former a carriage-road to Aquila has been constructed in the plain, through some meadows producing hay as fine and fragrant as in England. These are watered by different branches of the river Aterno, purposely divided and dammed up for the purpose of irrigation. Notwithstanding these rural advantages, and the

clusters of villages which render it, for its size, the best peopled district in the kingdom, the general aspect of the plain is dreary from the want of trees, and the bleak and bare surface of the encircling mountains.

About a mile and half from Aquila, which at that distance has a very imposing aspect, the Aterno is crossed, and the road I had followed joins that from the capital, which soon after is conducted up the hill on which the city is placed, which it enters by a handsome gate or rather archway.

The foundation of Aquila is attributed upon well authenticated grounds to the Emperor Frederick II. of the house of Swabia, who, by a diploma preserved in the collection known as Letters of Petrus de Vineis, ordained the construction of the city, and that it should be peopled by the inhabitants of no less than ninety small burghs, villages, and castles in the vicinity: among the former were comprised Amiternum and Furconium, places of great antiquity and some importance in the Sabine and Vestine territories, which had pre-

served their original names under the lower empire, and were honoured with episcopal rank.

The execution of Frederick's decree, which was promulgated but a few years before his death, appears not to have been completely fulfilled until the beginning of the reign of his son and successor, Conrad.

The intention of both sovereigns had evidently been influenced by the hope of opposing an effectual barrier to the rapacious and usurping pretensions of the Roman pontiffs, who persecuted the whole race of Stauffen with unrelenting animosity: but the new colony showed themselves animated with sentiments of a very different nature, and deserved the reproach of signal ingratitude by having, very early, sided with the papal party; and Manfred, who succeeded to Conrad, deemed it necessary to inflict a somewhat severe castigation upon them, by burning and devastating the city.

Charles of Anjou, however, notwithstanding his apparent submissiveness to the pontifical

power, which had invested him with the kingdom he had conquered, very soon rebuilt Aquila, and favoured it by the grant of special privileges.

The interior of the city of Aquila recalls to the traveller's recollection some portions of Rome: many circumstances combine to corroborate this resemblance; but none more strikingly than the number of large churches, well-built palaces, and the depopulated and singularly lonesome aspect of its streets.

It contains at the present day about eleven thousand inhabitants, having once boasted of six times that number.

No town in the whole kingdom has suffered so repeatedly from the scourge of external war and intestine feuds ever since its first construction.

Its local position, contiguous to the Roman states, and on a road which forms one of the principal inlets into the realm, has generally rendered it one of the first points of attack for every invading enemy; and the valiant, but little known and fruitless resistance it has frequently opposed on such occasions, has, in the lapse of ages, greatly contributed to dimi-

nish its population. Another cause may be found in the emigration of the lower classes: but the principal losses to its numbers must be referred to the repeated shocks of earthquakes it has undergone; the last of which, in the year 1707, overthrew a great portion of the city, and destroyed or dispersed a large quantity of the inhabitants, two thousand of which were crushed in one church alone.

Its name, as well as the eagle chosen as its crest, is supposed to denote its imperial origin; though, perhaps, the elevated position in which it was constructed may be looked upon as suggesting both the one and the other.

Placed on an insulated eminence, rising from a plain already considerably above the level of the sea, it enjoys the advantages of a pure air, which barely compensate a variable state of atmosphere in the summer, and a winter of protracted duration.

The water, which abundantly supplies its numerous fountains, is brought by means of an aqueduct along a distance of four miles from a neighbouring mountain.

The streets in general are wide and well

paved; and the buildings display a style of architecture, and a scale of dimensions, which establish one of the points of similitude with Rome: they are mostly constructed of a fine white stone found in the vicinity, and adorned with sculptured door and window frames.

The churches, which are likewise spacious, bear exteriorly the same character, especially in their portals; which, having generally withstood the effects of the earthquake, offer in the clustered pillars supporting the arch, and the florid scroll-work which enriches its curve, very exquisite specimens of execution.

During those calamitous times when a misapplied notion of liberty subjected all the principal cities of Italy to the varying and oppressive rule of contending factions, none was more frequently or mournfully distinguished by the contests of the Guelphs and Ghibellines: and an opinion still exists among the natives that the former party had adopted, as an exterior symbol, the short stanchion which divides and sustains the small double arches constituting the gothic windows of the old houses; while the same arches, without this centrical support,

are supposed to have denoted the dwellings of their antagonists.

The places of worship, including monasteries, are seventy in number; which, as may be imagined, are far beyond what may be required by so limited, however devout, a population.

There are several public buildings of a magnitude amounting to magnificence; among which the ancient governor's palace and the citadel stand foremost, both erected in the reign of Charles V.

The former was the abode of his natural daughter, Margaret of Austria, who, after the death of her two husbands, Alexander of Medici, and Octavio Farnese, was appointed governess of these provinces, great portions of which had been granted to her and her descendants as personal property.

She divided her time between these domains and the city of Rome, where the Palazzo and Villa *Madama* still retain the name derived from this circumstance.

She died at Ortona, a sea-port on the Adriatic, which, on account of its milder temperature, she had selected as her winter residence,

and where she likewise had erected a princely dwelling.

Tradition has preserved a peculiar, but not very attractive, description of the disposition and person of this princess in maturer years, and an unfavourable recollection of her mode of governing: she is described as having been harsh in her manner, fidgetty in her habits, which led her to be always riding (not on a side-saddle) about the country, and masculine as well as ordinary in her form and visage; which aspect was considerably aggravated by a huge pair of bushy yellow mustachios.

The intendente, or governor's present habitation, on the point of completion while I was there, is a suppressed monastery, well adapted from its size and solidity to the dwelling of a public functionary; Aquila being the capital of the largest and most important of the three divisions comprehending the province of Abruzzo.

A very handsome theatre had been constructed in one part of this edifice when it was first converted to its present use, the por-

tion destined to the reception of the spectators being, like Palladio's Olympic theatre at Vicenza, semicircular and unprovided with boxes, which gives it a very striking and novel effect. The scenery was also painted, and the decorations and machinery organised in a style of execution not unworthy of the metropolis, when the bishop, in his zealous solicitude for the morals of his flock, discovered that a wall of very limited extension united this temple of profane amusement to the church which had originally appertained to the convent, and was still used for divine service. An immediate application was directed to the most influential department, and a supreme decree promptly issued to prohibit all dramatic performances; which has condemned it to useless repose, except occasionally for concerts or balls in the winter season; a smaller and not inelegant theatre having been substituted for the diversion of the inhabitants.

These bear a strong resemblance to the Romans in their general demeanour, manners, dress, and even language; which is not surpris-

ing, when it is considered that the majority of those in easy circumstances are usually educated at Rome.

Among the numerous churches existing at Aquila, the interior of which is stamped with a character of uniformity, some good paintings are to be found; one in particular, representing the baptism of Constantine by St. Silvester, to whom the church is dedicated: it is by a Tuscan artist, named Baccio Ciarpi, not much known, but considered as the master of Pietro di Cortona. This picture is remarkable, not only from the excellence, but the peculiar style of its execution, which closely resembles that of Paolo Veronese. A work of the divine Raphael once graced this same building, having been placed there by a native of Aquila, named Branconi, who held the rank of one of the Cubicularii to Leo X, and bespoke it from the artist, at his own cost, for the purpose of placing it in his family chapel, as his epitaph still attests. One of the bishops of the city, during the misrule of the viceregal government, and himself a Spaniard, exerted a flagrant abuse of authority in withdrawing it from its posi-

tion, and sending it to the Escurial, where it was for a long while looked upon as one of the *chef-d'œuvres* of that celebrated collection.

The general belief is, that the King of Spain presented it to the Duke of Wellington, in whose possession it now remains. The subject was the Visitation, and a copy was executed to supply its place; but this is now so defaced, that it is difficult to recognise any vestige of its original merits.

The finest church in all its parts is that of S. Bernardino of Sienna, which, nevertheless, is not honoured with the title of cathedral: the front, which was executed by Cola dell' Amatrice, an eminent architect and painter, and a native of this province, presents a somewhat heterogeneous union of the Gothic with the Roman style, prevailing at the beginning of the sixteenth century, but blended with sufficient ingenuity and taste to produce a pleasing and even imposing effect. The interior presents architectural details of a more modern and less eccentric taste; and it is, moreover, enriched by a variety of fine marbles, the production of the neighbouring mountains, whose tints

and polish emulate the finest specimens of verd and giallo antico.

The most remarkable object, however, is the sepulchral monument erected to the patron saint, a structure which, from its magnitude, the character of its execution, and its excellent state of preservation, may vie with any work of the kind which Italy has produced: it was executed at the end of the fifteenth century at the expense of a private citizen of Aquila, by an individual named Silvestro Salviati, a native of a small village in the vicinity, called Arischia. The stone of which it is composed is nearly equal to marble in the fineness of its grain and lustre, and is susceptible of receiving the most minute and delicate tracery, which is lavished upon it in the style denominated arabesque, the details of which are evidently suggested by the most classical models; though its form, that of a large casket with a vaulted top, is somewhat clumsy: in the various panels are several statues in alto relievo, of most exquisite design and sculpture, and the whole does great credit to the taste and powers of the sculptor.

This valuable specimen of art was broke

open during the first invasion of the French, in 1799, who, having met with some resistance in the town, wreaked their vengeance on the sacred edifices, and carried off from the interior of the shrine the massive silver chest containing the bones of the saint.

This costly vessel had been purposely manufactured with exquisite skill and labour by the order of Louis XI. of France, whose well-known devotion towards saints and their relics outstepped the ordinary limits of his economy on this occasion: it had, moreover, been submitted to the inspection and approbation of Sixtus IV. who filled the papal chair at this period (1481); whose admiration of it was so powerful, that he published a bull excommunicating any future violator of so precious an article, which did not prevent the soldiers of three centuries later from profaning it, and casting the holy bones into the street.

These were, however, preserved from dispersion, and have since been restored to their original resting-place in a receptacle of less costly materials. Another sepulchre in the same church is worthy of notice; tradition ascribes

it to the same author, but the style bears an earlier character. It is erected to the memory of an infant of the house of Camponesco, (a family celebrated in the annals of this city,) by its mother, a lady of Spanish origin.

The effigies of both are represented in recumbent postures, in two separate divisions one above the other; and they both are admirable for the beauty and delicacy of the faces, and the elegant simplicity of the figures.

A general of that race, by name Lello Camponesco, rendered himself illustrious under the reigns of Ladislas, and his sister the second Joan, for his valorous conduct, and in particular for his successful defence of Aquila against the attacks of the well-known Braccio di Montone, surnamed *Fortebraccio*, who was killed in its vicinity.

In the sacristia of this church, four small paintings on wood are shown, said to be the work of Giotto, and to represent various acts of the life of St. Bernardino: the two facts are incompatible with each other, as the artist died previously to the birth of the saint; but the singularity of the costumes, the correct-

ness of the drawing, the freshness of the colours, and, above all, their excellent state of preservation, combine to render them highly interesting.

Another very singular church is that called Santa Maria di Collemaggio, placed on a hill so named outside of the walls. It has a Gothic front incrusted with marble in squares of different hues, like that of the Duomo at Sienna, with a large arched portal and scrolled window: above these, an iron rail runs along the whole of the edifice, and from this, the Bishop of Aquila, on the 29th of August, reads a bull in favour of the city, granted by Celestinus IV, alias Peter of Morrone, the hermit, who was consecrated and crowned in this edifice on that day in the year 1294, and afterward buried in it.

The sepulchre containing his remains is smaller, and of earlier construction, but much in the same style as that of S. Bernardino.

A monastery of Celestine friars, the order which he had founded, had been established on the spot, but suppressed in more recent times by the French.

A community of the Franciscan rule, designated by the title of *Antoniani*, have since been allowed to occupy the convent; but they are so poor as to be disabled from keeping up the church and its appendages in the state of decent repair which it deserves.

During the occupation of the monastery by its original confraternity, one of them, a native of Flanders and a pupil of Rubens, adorned the church with the labours of his pencil, many of which are still in existence, and exhibit talents nearly approaching those of his master. I had already seen one of his works in the church of S. Bernardino; it was on a gigantic scale, and represents the crucifixion; the composition has a strong and poetical effect, though it is full of incongruities.

I found the paintings in the church of Collemaggio executed with a more careful hand: among them is a representation of the coronation of Celestinus, in the presence of Charles II. of Anjou, and his son Charles Martel, which shows superior merit; as well as another, commemorating an event relating to the history of Aquila.

But those which are most worthy of notice display a series of the miracles performed by the said pontiff, every one of which contains several figures of animals or birds, equal to any performances of the same kind by the most celebrated Dutch and Flemish masters: many of those are unfortunately much damaged by the effects of damp.

Aquila contains many ancient families in easy circumstances, whose habitations exhibit an appearance of affluence and respectability superior to most other provincial cities in the kingdom. The members of these are also distinguished by no common proportion of mental cultivation, extending far beyond the limits of their own country. I was no less pleased than surprised at finding many individuals conversant with the leading topics in English science and literature, kept up by the continued perusal of our most esteemed periodical publications.

I should be ungrateful, if among these I omitted the names of the Marquises Torres and Dragonetti, whose stock of information on all subjects derived additional value from the unaffected and truly obliging manner in which

it was conveyed: both these gentlemen possess a collection of pictures; in that belonging to the former, two cabinet pieces may rank as *chef-dœuvres*.

Among those belonging to Marquis Dragonetti, are several paintings by Pompeo dell' Aquila, a native artist worthy of more extended fame, and some Dutch pieces of still life, and flowers of superior beauty: he likewise possesses a fine selection of medals, and an extensive and well-chosen library.

The attentions and assistance of these distinguished individuals contributed not a little to add variety and interest to my stay at Aquila; and, united to the kindness of the Intendente, Prince Zurlo, in whom I recognised a friend of many years' standing, coloured my residence in that city with the most favourable tints.

Many other families preserve in their houses some specimens of the graphic art, as well as fragments of antiquity, among which a portion of a Roman calendar on stone deserves peculiar mention.

In times more remote, this city advanced claims to distinction in several of her sons,

who were renowned both in arms and letters. Among the former are numbered Simonetto, Rosso, Antoniello, and Menicuccio, all bearing the addition of Aquila instead of a family name, and celebrated among the condottieri of their age: the first improvisatore mentioned in the poetical records of Italy was likewise born here; of him (Serafino dell' Aquila) a long and detailed account may be found in Roscoe's life of Leo X. Among the earliest printing-offices established in the south of Europe must be noted one at Aquila, the management of which was conducted by a German named Adam Rotweiler.

Some antiquaries have believed that the present site of Aquila was included within the precincts of the ancient Sabine city of Amiternum; a circumstance entirely at variance with another hypothesis, which places it on the confines of the adjoining territory of the Vestini. The ruins and situation of Amiternum have, however, been recognised with more probability at a small village called S. Vittorino, about four miles distant from Aquila. This spot, which I visited on Whit-sunday of the year 1830, offers

some vestiges of antiquity; but these, except in a few portions of polygon walls on a hill, probably the citadel, do not point out a more remote æra than that of the Roman empire.

The situation, on a sloping bank above the river Aternus, from which it derived its name, is favourable to the necessities of a large town, and commands an extensive and cheerful view of the surrounding country.

Along the banks of the stream are to be seen the fine substructions of an ancient road; and beyond it stand the remains of an amphitheatre constructed of bricks, about the size of that at Pompeii.

The modern village consists of only a few huts scattered on the brow of the hill, with a small church, and a square detached tower adjoining it. The former, notwithstanding its dilapidated state, is celebrated throughout the province as a sanctuary of some renown; being the burial-place of the tutelary saint, Victorinus, who was bishop of the Christian Amiternum, and suffered martyrdom, with several others of his faith, at Cutilia, in the Sabine country, from whence their remains were con-

veyed hither, and deposited in some catacombs excavated under the church. These are of no great extent, and offer nothing remarkable but a highly glazed ancient painting, on the rock, of the Virgin, Child, and St. Joseph, in a tolerable state of preservation, and deserving some attention, from a more graceful roundness of outline, and a more correct style of design, than is generally observable in the early works of the same nature.

The walls of the church, as well as those of the contiguous tower, contain many Roman inscriptions; one of which is curious, as the only relic that mentions the existence of Aveja, a town supposed to have stood near Fossa, a village to the south of Aquila. There was a great concourse of country folks of both sexes within and round the church, attracted by the festal rites of the day, and a kind of fair for cotton handkerchiefs, ribbons, toys, and cakes.

These peasants appeared to be a hardy, sedate, and civilised race, without either obsequiousness or arrogance in their manner. The females, who were in general taller in proportion than the men, advanced no higher claim to good looks

than a straight form and a fair complexion; attributes which not imperfectly corroborated the assertion of one of my companions, that they descended, with but slight foreign mixture, from the Langobard tribes.

Their dress, of substantial and cleanly materials, was not unbecoming; consisting of a dark blue body, with sleeves of the same fastened on the shoulder with full bows of ribbon,—a petticoat of similar substance (cloth), and peculiar from the quantity of small plaits into which it is gathered,—and a head-dress formed of an oblong piece of white cotton or muslin, simply but most gracefully placed on the hair, and bordered with a deep row of thread-lace of a coarse but rich pattern.

Several of the men bore pieces of coloured silk of about two yards in length, which they displayed as the prizes that were to excite competition in a foot-race which was to take place in the evening.

On my way back to Aquila, I observed a number of springs that gush from the foot of the hills, and are said to dry up entirely every ten years, and remain dormant for two or three,

after which they resume their periodical course. Within a mile of the city, on the right of the road returning to it, a pool full of weeds is shown as the source of a river named Novanus by ancient writers; it is now called Lago di Vettoio. I had been struck, ever since my first entrance into Abruzzo, by the natural musical taste and ear of the natives of the lower classes; and at Aquila this remark was frequently renewed by the recurrence of choruses sung in parts with the most perfect harmony and intonation. They were chiefly executed by children as they returned from their evening tasks; but it was not uncommon, even at other times of the day, to see two boys walking or playing together, occasionally breaking out in similar strains, the effect of which offered a striking contrast to the discordant shouts which are sent forth in the shape of song by the vinedressers or woodcutters of Campania. It would be unfair to close all description of Aquila without some mention of its castle or citadel, which, though now become insignificant in a military point of view, exhibits a not uninteresting specimen of a for-

tress of the time of Charles V, constructed with all the skill of which that age could boast, and at an expense which even its present appearance may account for. It is situated just outside of one of the gates, somewhat above the level of the city, but commanded by other hills on all sides but that.

Its outward aspect is more imposing than picturesque, being a regular square surrounded by a deep fosse, and flanked by round towers immensely broad in proportion to their height. This ponderous mass of stone has withstood the ravages, or rather the neglect, of centuries, and the shocks of earthquakes; and shows itself exactly under the same form as that bestowed upon it under the viceroyalty of Peter of Toledo, in 1543: the solidity of the materials, the care displayed in the manner of connecting them, the immense subterraneous passages it contains, and the numerous embrasures now but scantily provided with artillery, show what efforts were made to secure to it the means of able and protracted resistance.

Several runs of water, supplied from the same aqueduct which furnishes the town, pro-

vide it with that most essential requisite; and if these were cut off, four deep wells, one at each angle, in an underground circular vault, added to several cisterns of rain-water, would still make up the deficiency: a small military force is stationed in it, and one portion is used as a prison.

The gateway is surmounted with a rich escutcheon within a carved scroll, bearing the quarterings of the Imperial arms, executed in marble with a degree of minuteness and finish that might grace more delicate labours; while the well-known emblem of the Herculean columns, and the enterprising motto *Plus ultra*, adopted by Charles V, are in perfect keeping with the style and character of the whole edifice.

CHAPTER VII.

Village of Prettura.—Remains of ancient Baths on the Banks of the Velino.—Curious Narrative.—Birth-place of Vespasian.—District of Tornimparte.—Antiquities of Alzana.—Antiquities at Pace.—Amiable qualities of my Hosts.—Beverage and Produce of the Country.—Murder of the Count Cenci.—Cattle-paths to Aquila.—Melancholy March of the Abruzzese Shepherds.—Laws for depasturing Cattle.—Decrease of the Flocks.—Town of Capistrano.

FROM Aquila I undertook a journey to Antrodoco, and the frontiers of the kingdom towards Rieti; and likewise made an excursion to that part of the district of Cicolano which I could not effect from Avezzano.

Leaving the road to S. Vittorino, at about three miles from the city, a track to the left crosses the Aterno over a bridge of most dangerous construction, and, passing by the village of Coppito, enters one of the narrow glens which open in many directions from the northern extremity of the valley or plain of Aquila.

That which we followed, between two low, but well-wooded ridges of hills, was watered by copious streams; and displayed, on either side of the road, a succession of meadows whose luxuriant verdure might vie with those of our native England.

The village of Prettura, pleasantly situated among them, contains a handsome villa and a large dairy-farm belonging to one of the most opulent families of Aquila, which supplies the market of that city with the best butter I ever tasted out of my own country.

After this, the boundaries of the valley assuming a greater extension and a more barren aspect, the way is dull and dreary, and brought us to a solitary tavern and church, about six miles from the city: the latter is dedicated to the Madonna della Strada, or Sancta Maria Viatorum.

The remainder of the road runs through a wider valley bounded by naked hills of no considerable elevation; the least unfertile portions of which produce scanty corn, growing among luxuriant weeds and wild flowers, while the edge of the path is bordered with sloe-bushes,

white and black thorn, dwarf ilex, and the plant bearing the cornelian cherry.

It is but traced, and so stony as to preclude any progress beyond that of a foot's pace, but is in no part rough or dangerous.

Rocca di Corno, a wretched-looking village, is seen at a short distance on the right; and, about four miles from Antrodoco, the mountains close on the road by degrees, till they leave but space for it and the bed of a torrent: this pass, rising precipitously on either side, forms the defile of Antrodoco, a post which, being easily defended by a small force, has always been considered as of importance in checking the advance of an invading enemy.

In 1798, the peasantry and inhabitants of Antrodoco opposed so effectual a resistance to a column of the French army as to kill a considerable number and repel the remainder: not so in 1821, when the Austrian forces entered the kingdom, and forced their passage after a very insignificant contest; which, however, cost the German troops many lives, and is recorded as the only action that took place during the whole of their march to Naples.

A large tavern and church are placed in the most contracted part of the pass; the last is called the Madonna delle Grotte, being in reality partly built in a cave, the rugged projections of which are seen intruding through the walls and vaults in several places. It contains nothing worth notice, except a good painting over the altar, apparently a copy of some ancient master.

From this spot, the road assumes a more rapid and winding descent, and brings one to Antrodoco, situated about two miles farther, on the river Velino, at the junction of three valleys, or rather glens: one, through which we had descended; the second, through which the Velino approaches the town from behind the stupendous mountain that frowns over it; the third, being the larger and better cultivated vale, which conducts the same river along the road to Civita Ducale, the boundary of the Neapolitan kingdom, and to Rieti, the frontier of the Roman states.

The town itself presents to the eye nothing better than an unseemly mass of shabby buildings with red-tiled roofs; but the ruined castle

above it, the variety and richness of the vegetation which borders the stream, and the fantastic form of the mountain ridges that enclose it on either side, richly covered with oak and chestnut woods, make a most interesting picture of the whole.

The Velino is divided into two branches just below the town, forming an island laid out into gardens, meadows, and coppice thickets; and is tinged with that peculiar vitriolic hue which characterises all the sulphureous streams which abound in this valley. Three of these rise near the old castle, and are justly esteemed for their salutary qualities both in external and interior use.

A bridge over the Velino, at the entrance of the town, led us within its streets, which I found more regular than I had expected, and furnished with some good houses.

The intendente had provided me with a letter for one of the principal proprietors of Antrodoco; but I avoided consigning it to its address before I had secured an abode for the short time I meant to pass there, which I was fortunate enough to find in a house placed in

the only square, which its owners allowed me to convert to all the uses of an inn, though they professed not to keep one.

The gentleman to whom I was recommended, and who paid me a visit as soon as he got his letter, offered the use of his own mansion, but very slightly enforced my acceptance of it; limiting his assistance to the only objects I sought, namely, general information respecting the country, and his own company during an excursion I made the following day in the direction of Civita Ducale.

There are but few villages scattered along the brows of the adjoining hills; among which Borghetto on the left, and Canetro, Monte Sant' Angelo, and Paterno on the right, are the largest. Under the first of these, and near the road, about two miles from the town, are seen spacious and well-preserved brick ruins, which were evidently baths.

Vestiges of constructions of a similar nature abound on both sides of the Velino; and the district is well known to have been celebrated for its cold waters, which were resorted to by the inhabitants of ancient Rome.

Most of these springs, as well as the river itself, leave a thick sediment on all the substances over which they flow, and depositions of this kind are found in great abundance throughout the valley: they are dug out, and used in masonry wherever a light, and at the same time solid, material is required to fill up considerable masses, such as arches or buttresses.

A remarkable specimen of this kind of deposition presents itself at a very little distance from Antrodoco in the shape of a bank of considerable length, height, and thickness, running from the lateral mountains to the immediate banks of the river: it was cut through when the road was made; and the small rill which had formed it by its coats of sediment during the revolving course of many centuries was at the same time turned off into the neighbouring fields: but it is curious to observe the regularity of the layers of which it is composed, and the depressed channel at the top, through which the water flowed which gradually increased its bulk.

The road was much worse than that of the

preceding day, and rendered our drive somewhat tedious; though its extension was but limited, terminating at a spot where it turns to the right into another and larger valley in which Civita Ducale is situated. Here, under the village of Paterno, and below some fine ruins of Roman baths, stands the lake, which still bears the name of Cutilia, from a city so called, the remains of which are placed by Cluverius in the adjoining flat.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus mentions both one and the other; adding, that in the former a floating island existed, to which the natives attached a sacred origin and divine attributes. Here, according to the same author, the Pelasgi rested on their first entrance into Italy, having recognised in the spot that which the oracle of Dodona had pointed out as the final term of their wanderings. The position and dimensions of this pool entirely coincide with the description given of it by Dionysius; but the island is no longer visible: and it is to be observed that in another much smaller pond, situated on lower level on the left side of the road, two or three masses of a vegetable substance appear

floating on its weed-covered surface, and are said by the country people to be put into motion when the wind is sufficiently strong.

This is called Pozzo di Rastignano, or Pozzo Sfondato, from the often-believed tradition that it is fathomless.

The water bubbles up in the centre with such violence as to keep that spot entirely clear from the film which covers all the remainder. The stream it produces is sufficiently powerful to turn a mill erected close to it; and its taste is sweet, but flat and mawkish. Very near it are three springs, gushing from the soil at equal distances from each other; one of which is sulphureous, the other slightly acidulated, and the third drinkable, and resorted to by the natives as such.

A little below these, towards the river, are several more pools of the same nature and form, all designated by the name of Pozzo, with the several additions of Bollente, Freddo, Torbido, &c. They are mostly sulphureous; and their waters, which communicate by small channels, finally discharge themselves into the Ve-

lino. They are generally coloured with that vitriolic tint which distinguishes similar waters: a few are clear and tasteless; but all are extremely cold, and boil up with remarkable force from the middle.

The Abbé Chaupy, following the opinion of Varro cited by Pliny, which makes this spot the central point of Italy, has looked upon it as identical with Virgil's lake of Arusanctus; an hypothesis which has been much disputed.

An old peasant, who accompanied us in the investigation of these singular phenomena, added greatly to the interest and curiosity they inspired by the recital of a circumstance which happened about ten years before.

Being at work with other labourers in the vicinity of these pools, they observed the water in one of them to sink and finally disappear in a very short space of time; leaving the sides, which were very steep, and the interior in its whole depth, entirely dry and exposed to view.

On one side of the cavity, placed in circular array, they observed a row of marble steps, or seats, surrounding a large jar or urn of

earthenware, closely covered with a lid of the same material, measuring about fourteen feet in height.

The spectators which had collected round the basin, attracted by the singularity of the circumstance, were impressed with the notion that this gigantic vessel must contain something precious; and, after a lapse of four or five hours, they let down one of the party, by ropes fixed round his waist and shoulders to secure his retreat as well as to effect his descent; and moreover, in their impatience to obtain the object of their research, they flung large stones at the vase, and succeeded in effecting some fissures on its surface: but before they could proceed very far in their operation, the water returned in such abundance, and with such rapidity, that they had scarcely time to draw up the investigator; and in a very short space of time the pool was restored to its wonted state, the objects entirely covered, and the stream flowing from it as usual. The water, however, appeared to be tinged with a yellow and thick liquid; and emitted for some days after a strong and fragrant aromatic odour,

which they supposed to proceed from the contents of the jar issuing from the openings they had made.

The old man's memory did not seem very correct in the details of his marvellous narration; but the principal facts were attested by several other witnesses, who agreed in their account of them.

After a halt of about two hours, which were spent in examining these lakes, the various remains of Roman constructions that are found near them, and some fine traces of the Via Salaria, running parallel to the modern road, I returned to Antrodoco, and, in so doing, had a more favourable opportunity of observing the beauty of the scenery which distinguishes the banks of the Velino from Antrodoco to Civita Ducale, and indeed as far as Rieti.

Their produce and cultivation attest the mildness of the climate as superior to that of Aquila and its environs; for here the olive thrives on the lower slopes of the hills, while the vines are seen growing to their very summits,—with this distinction, that in the upper regions they are cut low and tied to canes, and

in the lower grounds they are trained upon trees as in Tuscany and the neighbourhood of Naples.

Potatoes, beans, Indian corn, and a variety of esculent vegetables, abound on the flatter banks of the river, while magnificent forests crown the higher ridges; so that, if ever the road is rendered practicable, which it scarcely is at present, the drive from Antrodoco to Rieti will be one of the most agreeable in Italy, and would open a new and short line of communication for travellers returning from Naples to the northern parts, who would thereby vary their course by avoiding Rome and the tedious repetitions of its campagna; as a very tolerable road exists between Rieti and Terni, following the line of the Velino to the lake of Pié di Lecco, and the celebrated fall of Le Marmore. From Rieti, also, a secondary, but not very good road, is frequented by all the inhabitants of this portion of the kingdom in their frequent communications with the papal states and their capital; the upper classes (as I have before noticed) making it their residence for

some part of the year, and sending their children for education thither.

The lower ranks use it for a passage to the deserted and unhealthy regions of the Roman and Tuscan maremma, which they assist in cultivating; and for this purpose a numerous emigration of individuals of both sexes takes place every year, in whom the love of gain, and habits of suffering and labour, predominate over other considerations, and who are by these induced to quit their native homes to obtain a precarious existence at a higher rate of wages.

This propensity is deprecated as a serious injury to a country already verging on depopulation, and naturally not fertile; as it is not only for many months deprived of their powers, but a large proportion of these deluded victims never return from the pestilential marshes to which they resort, and the survivors bring with them the elements of disorders which the keen and bracing air of their mountains cannot overcome, and which frequently assume an endemic and even contagious character.

These evils almost excite the wish that a go-

vernment essentially despotic, and sufficiently disposed to exert its coercive power in restraining individuals of a more exalted class from leaving their country in search of instruction, should extend similar prohibitions to a miserable race, who, through the infatuation of habit, and a mistaken thirst after gain, bring serious disadvantages on their country, and heavy calamities on themselves.

Antrodoco boasts of no relics of antiquity, but has been recognised as *Interocrea*, a station recorded in the ancient itineraries, on the Via Salaria, between Reate and Phalacrina: this last name is still given to the valley which runs to the north of Antrodoco, and serves as a channel to the Velino, from its original source, near Civita Reale, which is looked upon as the representative of the ancient Phalacrina.

This small village, (vicus modicus,) as Suetonius terms it, was the birth-place of Vespasian, who retained such an affection for it that he frequently resorted to it, as well as to the baths and cold springs of Cutilia, the immoderate use of which was supposed to have hastened his death, as well as that of his son Titus, which

took place at a residence he possessed in these regions.

From Antrodoco I returned to Aquila, and at a subsequent period undertook a journey from this last town to the district of Cicolano, already alluded to in a former chapter, for the execution of which my friends at Aquila afforded me every facility which I could not master at Avezzano.

The way, for some miles, was the same I had followed to Antrodoco; but quitted that road at a small village of a few houses called Sasso, just below a larger, on the mountains to the right, named Civita Tommasa.

As far as this we had used a carriage, but left it to mount some horses, which had been sent from Aquila; on which, under the guidance of a drunken old vagabond, who knew the way, but appeared to forget it purposely, we pursued the rest of our day's journey.

This lay, first, across a pretty smooth valley in which are collected several villages forming a district called Tornimparte: leaving this to our left, we climbed a bare hill, then crossed a second valley, after which the ascent of another

mountain brought us to a point overlooking the entire regions of Cicolano. These, on a first aspect, were extremely beautiful: the singular ramifications of the hills, the fantastic form of their upper extremities, and the magnificent forests that embrace the inferior belts, present a spectacle of freshness and tranquillity which is very attractive.

We descended through these umbrageous recesses, crossed the verdant meadows and the silver streams that refresh them, and at last found ourselves at a little village called Sant' Elpidio, in the heart of the district, about three miles from another called Pace, which was destined to be our residence that night and the following: thither I despatched a messenger with the credentials which were to propitiate my reception; and, after a slight refreshment, examined the antiquities which existed very near our resting-place.

These are supposed to point out the site of the town of Suna, mentioned by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, some similarity to which is still preserved in the name of Alzana, now given to the place in question.

They consist of three rows of polygon walls, one above another, as at Alba; and a very curious monument exists between the first and second. This is a circular subterranean structure, formed of uncemented stones placed longitudinally, each row gradually projecting above the under one, till they bring it to a pyramidical shape, truncated at top, and closed by two semicircular flat slabs joined together, and having a round opening in the centre, above which another stone is placed which closes it.

The entrance into this fabric, which in shape is exactly like a bee-hive, is from one side, at an aperture like a small window, through which the earth which had filled it has been removed: but the interior has not been excavated to a sufficient depth to verify the original height of the building, which however does not appear likely to have been considerable, the diameter at the lowest extremity not measuring above six feet. It is supposed by the natives to have been used as a cistern; but its miniature resemblance to the fabric known by the name of the Treasury of Atreus at Mycenæ, and so ably described by Sir William Gell in

his Argolis, may point it out as adapted to the same purpose, though it has likewise been looked upon as a granary.

After bestowing all due attention on these remains, we cast a much slighter portion of notice on some Roman ruins, also near Sant' Elpidio, or rather Torre di Taglia, the appellation of the district in which these villages are placed; and their comparatively recent origin did not corroborate the notion advanced by some native antiquaries, that its real name was Torre *d'Italia,* as that of one of the most remote aboriginal foundations.

We afterwards proceeded to Pace, to the house of one of the principal proprietors of Cicolano, the extended white front of which showed itself at a great distance, and covered as much ground as the whole of the village put together. Here we were received with the wonted hospitality of these unfrequented regions by the proprietors, two brothers constantly residing there, who vied with each other in offering us more attention and accommodation than we ever could have expected.

The next day we resumed our researches

with the little village of Nesce, supposed to represent the ancient Nursæ mentioned only by Virgil:

> Et te montosæ misere in prœlia Nursæ.

The native antiquary I have spoken of, Signor Martelli, has not hesitated, notwithstanding this solitary reference to its existence, to point it out as the capital of the Equi, and the residence of Saturn himself.

The remains which it retains, and which undoubtedly attest the existence of a town of some importance, are nevertheless stamped with a character of less remote antiquity in their form and construction. They are situated in a woody glen near the Salto, under another village called Civitella di Nesce, and consist of several ranges of walls, the stones of which are placed in a much less irregular manner than those of the walls of Suna. The most interesting of these form a square enclosure or peribolus, each front of which, with its corresponding angle, is so perfect as to furnish an exact notion of their dimensions.

Several other fragments of walls are to be found in all directions near these; and, a little

below them, numerous stone sepulchres, of such smooth and exact masonry as to leave no doubt of their Roman origin, even if an abundance of inscriptions, votive altars, shafts and capitals of columns, scattered among them, did not prove it still more clearly. In the midst of these, however, a fragment of Cyclopian wall shows itself of the most irregular and remote style: and not far from it two subterranean receptacles, like that at Suna, have been found; one has not been excavated, but the lid has been removed, and shows the upper part of the interior construction; the other is filled with water, and used as a cistern. Some fragments of opus reticulatum are also visible, which, with the imperial coins found on the spot, afford indubitable evidence that the town, however remote its first foundation, had received considerable additions from the hands of the Romans at a much later period. Among these relics, by far the most remarkable is a sepulchral inscription, in Latin, engraved on the surface of a rock roughly hewn into the shape of a square pedestal, or altar,

on some steps, and most picturesquely placed in a thicket of evergreens.

Besides the vestiges of antiquity here specified, to which I gained an easy access, the whole course of the Salto is distinguished by similar objects, in addition to bridges of one arch, aqueducts, and the frequent traces of a paved road; proving the whole district to have been thickly inhabited at a very distant æra.

The house I inhabited at Pace was extremely spacious, and most of the villages of Cicolano are adorned by a similar edifice belonging to the principal proprietor, formerly, and not unfrequently now, dignified by the title of baron. In the present instance, the individual on whom devolved the greatest portion of the territorial inheritance, made it his habitual residence; but gave up the management of the estate, and the regulation of his domestic establishment, to a younger brother, whose habits of business as a member of the law, which was his profession, fitted him for such an occupation. They were both single, and past the

prime of life; but other brothers were married and established elsewhere, leaving their portions of the patrimony to be administered by the above-mentioned delegate, who regularly transmitted to them the income they produced.

The letter I brought with me was addressed to him, nor could I for some time discover, from his brother's manner and discourse, that he was the eldest.

Similar instances of family union and confidence are of common occurrence in almost all parts of the kingdom, and are frequently still more forcibly exemplified by the spectacle of various married branches, or generations of the same stock, residing with their respective families under the same roof, and collected at the same table in a state of uninterrupted harmony and friendship.

These habits, the most natural, and certainly the most advantageous to the united interests of an extensive family, while they prove the slow advance of the conveniencies, luxuries, and refinements of modern life, which entail so many wants on more civilised races, speak at the

same time favourably for the natural disposition and temper of those who adhere to them with so little effort, and consequently with so much self-satisfaction. I remarked here the same deference and regard manifested by the lower classes towards my hosts as I had noticed at Civita d'Antina, only with perhaps a little less exterior show of submission.

The house was undergoing considerable repairs and additions, which afforded labour, consequently subsistence, to a great proportion of the population; while numbers of the remainder were occupied in the daily avocations attending the cattle, and appertaining to a farm, which a level surface of some extent allowed to be cultivated, and which produced a sufficient quantity of corn, wine, olives, fruit, and various sorts of vegetables of good quality.

It appeared that the beneficent disposition of the landlords provided for the necessities of the poor as well as the laborious; and that all who came in hungry were fed in the hospitable kitchen. These benevolent qualities, I apprehend, were extended beyond the limits of prudence, if I may judge from the

number of individuals I saw every evening, who had evidently partaken too largely of the liquid donations so indiscriminately bestowed as to become the incentives to both idleness and licentiousness.

The temperature of this district is considered milder in winter and cooler in summer than that of Aquila, which may easily be accounted for by the sheltered position of the majority of the villages which compose it, as well as the narrowness of the valleys among which they are placed. The fact is exemplified by the earlier maturity and superior flavour of most of the common fruits, although the snow falls often, and lies long on the ground, during the winter months.

We found at our hosts' hospitable table a very distinguished exception to the usual quality of the daily beverage, in a light and excellent white wine, resembling Rhenish, and manufactured on their property; the common sort being throughout the provinces of Abruzzo boiled to ensure its durability, which operation gives it a peculiar and very unpleasant flavour.

I observed here, what had often struck me before, that the higher classes of proprietors in this, as well as almost every other part of the second Abruzzo, look to the Roman states for all the advantages or returns to be derived from the produce of their estates, and regard the capital of these as their own.

The communication established along the course of the Salto with Rieti, and the proximity of that place to the eternal city, satisfactorily account for this.

It is seldom, therefore, that those who can afford a journey of either pleasure or interest, prefer the Neapolitan to the Roman metropolis; and I could perceive, not only that they consider this last as the channel of all foreign intelligence, but that all their correspondence is carried on in that direction.

The immediate vicinity of the frontier is a great incitement to contraband trade; and I was not surprised to learn that it is prosecuted with great success, notwithstanding the severe regulations adopted by the authorities against it, and the innumerable stations and subaltern agents established to enforce them.

Among the numerous villages that are now comprised in the regions of Cicolano, I cannot omit the mention of Petrella, situated to the north-west, and nearly at the extremity of the district, as the scene of the murder of Count Francesco Cenci, at the instigation of his wife and his daughter Beatrice, whose beauty, crimes, and misfortunes were in themselves sufficient to transmit her name to posterity, had not the pencil of Guido left a still more impressive record of her person.

This village formed part of the extensive and powerful feudal tenure of Mareri, belonging to a family of the same name, which, with many others, probably all originating from Provence, had, after the conquest of the kingdom by Charles of Anjou, subdivided among themselves the territories which had till then constituted the country of the Marsi, and had mostly exchanged their original names for those of the fiefs so lavishly bestowed upon them.

That of Mareri becoming extinct, the property in lapse of time was conferred on that branch of the Colonna family distinguished

by the adjunct of Sciarra, and it belonged to an individual of that race, Marzio, at the period above mentioned; when old Cenci, who was nearly allied by the ties of kindred and friendship to this nobleman, obtained his permission to establish a temporary residence in his baronial castle of Petrella during the season of the autumnal villeggiatur.

The general outline, as well as the catastrophes of this atrocious tragedy is probably well known to most of my readers; but the details of the plot are no less singular than characteristic of the habits and manners of the age that witnessed such a deed, and would probably have never been brought to light, had not the exalted station of the perpetrators, and the conflicting interests which suspended their doom for a considerable space of time, given publicity to facts which have been recorded in a few rare manuscripts.

It should be observed, that the removal of the whole family to this spot, beyond the temporal jurisdiction of the papal government, who were already but too well apprised of the brutal iniquities which for many previous years had

degraded the character of the old man, and rendered him an object of universal reprobation and disgust, was in all probability the event which excited in the criminals the final resolution of destroying him.

Beatrice's advocates on the trial did not fail in their endeavours to prove that her father had selected this remote and solitary residence as best suited to the continuance of that course of ill-treatment and degradation to which he had ever subjected, not only all the persons nearly connected with him, but her in particular; who had, moreover, to apprehend the renewal of the criminal and revolting designs of which she had on previous occasions but too forcible reason to complain.

The wife, with her step-daughter and son, Beatrice and Giacomo, had submitted the execution of a deed, which they represented more in the light of self-preservation than revenge, to a prelate named Monsignor Guerra, who had been their friend and adviser in all their sufferings, and who not only approved, but lent his assistance and direction to the first plan they had formed. This was a deep and

well-combined scheme, which, had it been executed as intended, might have succeeded without the hazard of detection or discovery.

The whole of the family and their domestics were to have been attacked and robbed by one of the numerous hordes of banditti which from time immemorial have infested the frontiers of the Roman and Neapolitan states. The old Count was to have been detained in the hands of the brigands, to answer with his life for the ransom they exacted, and which the rest were to promise to pay on being liberated. This being of considerable amount, and therefore difficult to procure, the tardiness observed in remitting it would have doomed the prisoner to death; an event by no means unfrequent in those days, and not beyond the verge of probability in the present.

But the impossibility of transmitting the plan in time to prepare and train the band for its successful execution, rendered it unavailing, and the Count's destiny was postponed for a short time.

The violence and injustice of his own disposition proved auxiliaries to it, for having

quarrelled with, ill used, and even discharged the keeper of the castle of Petrella, named Olimpio; revenge easily rendered this man a willing instrument to the designs of the Countess and Beatrice; and it was to him, and a hired assassin called Marzio, that the execution of the sanguinary deed was entrusted.

The murder was committed while the victim was asleep in his bed; and the body afterwards thrown from a terrace into the castle-ditch, to induce the belief that an accidental fall had occasioned his death,—an opinion very difficult to be established through an examination of the nature of the wounds that had caused it. As it was, the body never reached the ground, having been caught and entangled in the boughs of an elder-tree growing in the fosse; and there it was found, with the eyes perforated by the branches.

It does not appear that any very strict investigation was then established as to the cause of the accident, and the mangled corse was buried in the parish church of Petrella, where the tomb still exists. The judicial proceedings which were subsequently entered upon

against the culprits commenced in the Neapolitan tribunals, as regarding a crime committed within the pale of their jurisdiction; but the principal instigators of the deed being Roman subjects, they were transferred to the pontifical chamber, and the time occupied in legally establishing the criminality of the perpetrators was considerable. Monsignor Guerra had escaped in the early stages of the business in the disguise of a coal-heaver, and through his instigation the assassin Olimpio, whose criminatory confessions were apprehended, was dispatched by another hireling; which last being apprehended for this murder, his avowals afforded a clew to all that remained undiscovered: and the subsequent deposition of a female of Petrella, to whom Beatrice had secretly given the sheet to wash which bore the bloody proofs of her father's fate, added to the apprehension and final confession of Marzio the second assassin, brought the conviction of the deed too closely home to admit of acquittal. The unshaken firmness and persevering denials of Beatrice, together with her youth, beauty, and previous excellence of character,

strongly combined to excite in many persons a feeling of interest and compassion, which might have been influential in mitigating the severity of the sentence that awaited her. To these efforts were joined those of the many distinguished families united by consanguinity to hers, and the more disguised, but no less efficient instigations of bribery and corruption. Intrigues of a contrary tendency were, however, set on foot by a particular party who had much to gain from the extinction of this affluent family, and the confiscation of their property; but it is probable that mercy would finally have been extended to her, had not a fresh crime of a similar character been perpetrated at the time when her existence hung upon a thread. This was the murder of the Princess of Santa Croce by her two sons, who stabbed her with their own hands: this second instance of atrocious parricide turned the current of public feeling, and removed all hesitation and tendency to forgiveness from the mind of the reigning Pope, Clement VIII, (Aldobrandini,) who ordered the fatal sentence on the guilty

members of the Cenci family to be executed without delay.

I quitted Cicolano after a short residence of two days, and traced my way back to the Antrodoco road; not exactly along the same line I had followed, but by one nearly parallel, and offering little or no variety in the objects it presented: it joined the above-mentioned track at the tavern and church of Sta. Maria Viatorum, from whence I proceeded to Aquila, to prepare for my final departure from it on the following day.

My intention was to proceed to Teramo, and a straight course over the mountains would have enabled me to reach it in little more than one day; but the state of my health, and the difficulties of the road, though probably exaggerated, deterred me from so doing, and induced me to follow the beaten and circuitous, but more commodious track by Popoli, Chieti, and Pescara. That which I renounced might not have proved devoid of interest, the line of communication running under the roots of Monte Corno (the Gran Sasso), by a village

called Tottea (the only resting-place), and near the springs, and subsequently along the course of the river Vomano.

After descending the hill of Aquila, the road extends in a southern direction along the centre of the high valley, more deserving the name of plain, which runs nearly as far as Popoli. The Aterno, nearer the mountains on the right, runs in a parallel line with it, and the frequent glimpses which are caught of its stream serve to break upon the monotony of the general aspect; an effect which appears owing more to a peculiarity of colouring than the features of the country, which are well defined, and sufficiently varied to produce a contrary impression: the glens that open at a distance in the flanks of the mountains are mostly wooded, and always furnished with substantial villages: numerous streams flow from these into the Aterno, and many parts are well cultivated; but the whole is tinted with a wintry and ungenial atmosphere.

This tract of land was once almost exclusively adapted to the cultivation of saffron, which produce formed, some time back, one of

the principal and most lucrative exports of the province. Competition from other parts of Europe, and various causes, many of them local, have greatly injured this branch of agriculture, which, however, is still carried on on the stony banks of the higher portion of the valley of Aquila, which (contrary to my expectations) are much more favourable to the growth and quality of that plant than the level moist meadows adjoining the river.

One of the broad tratturos, or cattle-paths, runs in the same line with the high-road to Aquila; and I was so fortunate as to see it occupied by a very extended line of flocks, which slowly passed by the carriage for the space of a mile or more. The word 'fortunate,' adapted to such a spectacle, may excite a smile in my readers; but I own that I never beheld one of these numerous animal congregations plodding across the flats of Capitanata, or the valleys of Abruzzo, as far as the eye can reach, without experiencing a sensation of a novel and exciting kind, nearly allied to that of enjoyment, but which I shall not attempt to account for.

One shepherd heads each division of cattle, of which he has the peculiar care and direction: armed with his crook, he walks some paces in advance of his flock, followed by an old ram termed *il manso;* which word, meaning tame or instructed, has undoubtedly a more apposite signification than that of our bell-wether, though he is, as well as ours, furnished with a large deep-toned bell.

The sheep march in files of about twelve in each; and every battalion, if I may so call it, is attended by six or eight dogs, according to its number: these accompany the herd, walking at the head, middle, and rear of each flank.

The beauty and docility of these animals, which are usually white, has often been described, and their demeanour is gentle as long as the objects of their solicitude are unmolested; but at night they are so savage, that it would be dangerous to approach the fold they guard.

The goats, which bear a very small proportion to the sheep, and are in general black, wind up the array, and evince their superior

intelligence by lying down whenever a temporary halt takes place.

The cows and mares travel in separate bodies.

A certain number of these flocks, commonly those belonging to the same proprietor, are under the immediate management and inspection of an agent, entitled *fattore*, who accompanies them on horseback, armed with a musket, and better clad than the shepherds, who, both in summer and winter, wear the large sheep-skin jacket, and are in other respects provided with substantial though homely attire, and good strong shoes.

These Fattores are all natives of Abruzzo, an Apulian never having been known to undertake the profession: the former, through particular habits and the repeated experience of years, are looked upon as so peculiarly fitted for the care required by cattle, and indeed animals of all kinds, that all the helpers in the stables of the capital are natives of these provinces, or of the adjoining county of Molise.

In addition to these qualifications, they are esteemed an abstemious and honest race.

When following the calling of shepherds,

and occupied, as I saw them, in the duties of their charge in travelling, their countenances are almost invariably marked by the same expression, which combines mildness and sagacity with immovable gravity, and, it is painful to add, a look of deep-seated sadness; the whole caravan, animal as well as human, exhibiting, at least while engaged in one of those tedious peregrinations, a general appearance of suffering and depression, distinguishable in every individual that composes it.

The shepherd that opens the march, the independent manso, jingling his brazen bell, the flocks that follow, the dogs that watch over their security, and even the Fattore who directs the procession, all appear to be plodding through a wearisome existence of monotony and toil.

The extreme slowness of their progress, the downcast expression of every head and eye, and, above all, the indications of exhaustion and fatigue which are but too perceptible after a journey of more than a month's duration, may well account for this impression.

The animals suffer greatly from heat until they reach their summer dwelling, and full as much from lameness, which, when it has reached a certain pitch, becomes the signal for destruction. I saw a mule bearing no other load than the skins of those that had perished in this manner.

Several other beasts of burden follow the rear of the herds, laden with the various articles necessary for them and their guardians during their protracted march: these consist in the nets and poles requisite to pen the folds at night, the coarse cloth tents for the use of the shepherds, and a limited stock of utensils for milking, and boiling the produce of the flock. Among these are to be noticed some portable jointed seats of very ingenious though simple construction, composed of the stems of the giant fennel, a substance remarkable for its light and compact texture.

The cattle which I thus met near Aquila were within two days' journey of their resting-place, which is generally in some of the valleys placed on the lower flanks of the mountain

ridges, but sufficiently elevated above the larger plains to afford fresh and abundant herbage and a cooler temperature.

The duration of their abode in these regions is regulated by the rapid or slow progression of the summer season; in the course of which they shift their quarters, as the heat increases, till they reach the highest spots, which are the last divested of the deep snows in which they have been buried during three-quarters of the year.

Here large tracts of the finest pasture, rills of the coldest and purest water, and shady woods of considerable extension, are occupied by them during the remainder of the fine weather, and afford the *ne plus ultra* of enjoyment allotted to an existence of such restricted variety. A visit to those retreats at that period would undoubtedly exhibit a spectacle of far different interest and effect from that which I have endeavoured to describe, and stamped with a character which no other part of Europe (except some portions of Spain) is likely to present.

Had I remained later in these provinces, I should undoubtedly have encountered all the

inconveniences which must attend a similar excursion to have obtained the sight, and secured the recollection, of an encampment of this nature in all its most detailed features.

The upper regions, and most inaccessible recesses of the mountains which cover almost the whole surface of the second Abruzzo Ultra, are the scenes which nature appears to have purposely formed for, and appropriated to, the summer abode of these stupendous flocks. In Abruzzo Citra, or the province of Chieti, as it is likewise termed, no similar pastures exist, though it is not deficient in hilly tracts; and few are to be found in the division of Abruzzo Ultra prima, though the eastern flank and extended ramifications of the king of mountains, the Gran Sasso, are included within its precincts.

The paths which the herds follow in their annual migrations to and from Abruzzo are wide tracks marked out on the turf, the integrity of which is attended to with great assiduity. Under the generic name of Tratturo delle pecore, they all commence in the province of Capitanata or Púglia piana, and for

some time run parallel with each other till they reach the adjoining province of Molise, when some branch off to the higher districts of this region, which in some of its mountains, especially the Matese, affords a limited portion of summer pasture.

Continuing in a line with the shore of the Adriatic, the other cattle-paths occasionally intersect one another, and finally extend their various veins into Abruzzo Ultra, as above described.

This custom is involved in questions of such vital importance to the proprietors and inhabitants of these provinces, that one can scarcely wonder that it has existed, with very slight changes or modifications, ever since the Roman æra, and has at different periods called forth the attention of the most enlightened sovereigns and statesmen.

Alphonso of Aragon was, however, the first who, by establishing irrevocable laws and regulations as to the mode in which it was to be prosecuted, ensured a considerable revenue to the crown, and at the same time maintained the rights and advantages of the flock-holders.

From that epoch, all the lands granted to Apulians, under Censos or Emphitensis to the sovereign, were charged with the express condition of being let out, during the winter season, for the use of the Abruzzese possessors of cattle.

This being enforced as a law, the former found it a matter of consequence, if not of necessity to their interests, to become likewise proprietors of flocks, in order that, by a system of reciprocity, their herds might join those of Abruzzo in their summer migration, and participate in the benefits which the peculiar topography of that province only could afford to them.

It certainly is a circumstance worthy of notice that the climate and geological formation of two districts so nearly contiguous, and situated on the same line of coast, should differ so essentially as to render one totally unfit to support large flocks of cattle during the summer, while the other is disqualified for maintaining them during the opposite season.

It should be noticed, that the measures established by Alphonso of Aragon were entirely

favourable to the Abruzzese proprietor, who though he be the unconstrained and direct owner of his land, and not a lessee of the crown, can turn it to no other advantage than the pasturage obtained in the summer months; while the Apulian plains are fertile enough, and sufficiently favoured by climate, to repay the slight labour of various modes of cultivation.

During the French occupation of the kingdom, a more enlarged and less partial system of policy having prevailed, the restrictions were removed from the Apulians, and being thereby empowered to submit the culture of their land to what species of produce they preferred, much of it was ploughed and adapted to raising corn and cotton,—commodities which for a time proved a source of considerable gain, but only as long as the freshness of fertility inherent in an untilled soil, and the facility of disposing of the produce without competition, continued to exist. Time, and the close of the Continental war brought both these to a termination; and it was then discovered that while the Abruzzese landholder, who had no resource but his flocks,

was ruined by the abrogation of the old system, the Apulian proprietor had only gained a temporary advantage over his neighbour; and that a renewal of the anomalous and antiquated laws might, after all, restore a fairer balance between them.

Shortly after his return from Sicily, King Ferdinand I. instituted a committee, who, after taking the complaints of the Abruzzese into consideration, and maturely weighing them against the unlimited prerogatives granted to the Apulians, might frame some regulations which might equitably secure the welfare of both.

It is difficult to decide whether this result has been obtained by the promulgation of a royal decree which restored the ancient law to very nearly its original form, granting to the Apulians the right of cultivating one-third of their crown leases in any manner they think fit, but enforcing the obligation of allotting the remainder to the winter occupation of the cattle.

This has opened to the Abruzzese the stream of their former prosperity; but the flocks,

which had suffered considerable diminution from the causes above specified, have never been, and probably never will be, restored to their original numbers.

The Apulians have entirely ceased to have any share in the possession of cattle; and although they have the power of cultivating at their own option one-third of their property, and are certain of letting the remainder during the winter, the rents are so fallen, from the reduction of the flocks, that they find themselves upon the whole the only sufferers. Before the year 1800, the amount of sheep alone that travelled from Apulia to Abruzzo, and back again, was estimated at more than a million; but is now reckoned little more than half, of which about sixty thousand resort to the Roman coast for winter dwelling: a small quantity likewise remain in the sheltered parts of Abruzzo; these are called *pagliarde*, and are killed for butcher's meat, or their produce used for the purposes of rural economy.

It is calculated that about five thousand individuals obtain a subsistence by attending the cattle.

The plain of Aquila, for it is too wide to deserve the name of valley, is, as I have before observed, very well peopled; on both sides of the road numerous villages and farm-houses show themselves, and corroborate this appearance. The soil is evidently poor and unfertile, though abundantly irrigated by streams mostly flowing from the left; that is, from the heights intervening between the base of the Gran Sasso and the flatter district which I traversed; Intervera, Paganico, Picenza, Barisciano, and many other large villages, appear on that side. On the right stand those of Ocra, that of Bagni, the supposed seat of Furconium, and Fossa, the ancient Aveja. Under this last the river Aterno enters a parallel and narrow glen, also thickly studded with villages; and, winding through it, finds its way to the valley of Solmona, which I shall hereafter describe.

The cultivation is chiefly wheat, but much hay is made near the stream: fine walnut-trees, and an innumerable quantity of almond-trees, grow all over this region, but their isolated station adds no beauty to it.

I stopped to bait at a little village called

Poggio Picenza, the only one through which the road is conducted, and from which, looking back towards Aquila, a fine prospect of the whole plain is displayed.

After this, a long ascent brings one to another much more elevated flat, the country and all its appendages losing much in its outward aspect by this change. This is nevertheless well peopled, for Civita Retenga and Navelli are almost cities.

About five miles to the east of the former is seen the town of Capistrano, containing little more than two thousand inhabitants. It once belonged to the Grand-ducal family of Medici, and, after having passed through the possession of several princes of that house, finally returned to that of Bourbon, occupying the Neapolitan throne.

It would, however, have but little claim to the notice of the traveller or historian, had it not given birth to one of those singular personages, which enthusiasm, or perhaps fanaticism, rendered not uncommon in the age that produced him. Giovanni, whose family or surname has been lost in the adjunct of Ca-

pistrano, by which he has ever been designated, was born in that town in the year 1385, and distinguished himself through life as much by his erudition, as by his zeal and fervour in combating the germs of the various heresies that preceded the final reformation of the Roman church.

His learning and eloquence obtained for him employment from several popes in various councils, and were likewise forcibly opposed to the sects which were forming in Bohemia, Silesia, and Hungary. He ended a long and active life of indefatigable religious labour by preaching a crusade against the Turks, and raising a considerable army, which he led in person against them, joined to the forces commanded by the celebrated Huniades; the successful efforts of which compelled the infidels to raise the siege of Belgrade in 1456.

In his account of that memorable action, addressed to the pope and the emperor, he claimed the whole merit of the military deed; which induced Æneas Silvius, his contemporary, to observe that he who could spurn the pomps of the world, and fly from its riches

and allurements, was not proof against its glories.

He died three months after this exploit, at Villach in Carinthia; and, two centuries afterwards, his name was first admitted to the honours of beatification, and subsequently to a still more exalted rank in the Catholic hierarchy, having been canonized by Alexander VIII. at the intercession of the Franciscan order, to which he had belonged.

CHAPTER VIII.

Popoli.—The river Aterno.—Family of Cantelmo.—Tocco.—Monastery of San Clemente at Casauria.—Mountain ranges.—Pescara.—The ancient Aternum.—Victoria Colonna.—Death of Sforza.—Ortona.—The Gran Sasso.—The Salino.—Atri.—Teramo.—Antonio Campano.—D. Melchior Delfico and his nephew.—Ascent of the Gran Sasso.—Valle Siciliana.—Castelli.—The Republic of Senarica.

At the termination of the cheerless flat which we had reached, the road begins to descend in a zigzag course along the openings which give admittance to the vale of Solmona. The construction of this portion of the road alone, which may, in its windings, measure three miles in extent, has cost more than the whole of the remaining twenty-two miles to Aquila; being in many parts supported by large masses of masonry, arches, platforms, and

buttresses. The view from it southwards somewhat compensates the tediousness of the declivity, and the slowness of progress which it necessitates.

The town of Popoli shows itself at the base of the mountain; and the whole extent of the valley, richly cultivated, abundantly watered, and adorned with substantial villages, partly shaded by forest scenery, stretches under one's feet in an expanse of about thirteen miles in length, and from four to eight in breadth.

At the foot of the hill, close to the bridge which forms the entrance into the town of Popoli, a very abundant fountain has been erected, the design and sculpture of which display much taste and skill. This is fed by the various rivulets which run from the lateral ravines, and add in this spot their supplies to the course of the Aterno, already enriched and enlarged by those of the numerous rivers which irrigate the vale of Solmona, and fall into it. These are, the Gizio, rising at the southern extremity, which receives the smaller Vella just below Solmona, and afterwards the Sagittario, a copious mountain stream. About a mile to the south of

Popoli another very abundant brook, without a name, springs from some rocks close to the road-side, and mixes with the Aterno within the space of a few hundred yards; while, in the town itself, a much more considerable addition is poured into it by a river of equal size, the source of which is only about a mile distant, under the range of hills which form the northern boundary of the plain. This, I was assured by some peasants, is the real Pescara, a name which is given to the Aterno at Popoli, and which it preserves in its final course to the Adriatic. It is not surprising, therefore, if, under the above-mentioned bridge, it offers the appearance of a deep, rapid, and powerful river flowing in sullen majesty under dark willows between two sedgy banks.

Popoli contains about four thousand inhabitants, and presents that aspect of industry and activity which gains upon the partiality of a traveller at first sight. This is probably owing to its position as a thoroughfare, not only between Solmona and Aquila, but likewise between those two cities and Chieti, the capital of the adjoining province, and the shores and ports

of the Adriatic sea. It has a good square and some large houses, among which must be noticed a large and now dilapidated mansion, of handsome architecture, once the residence of the family of Cantelmo, dukes of Popoli, and the most opulent and influential in the province. It is now extinct, having merged into that of Tocco, princes of Montemiletto, through the female line. But this last, as well as all the descendants of the heiress in whom it terminated, have considered it a distinction to add the name of Cantelmo to their own with the adjunct of *Stuart*, the authority for doing which I was at some pains to discover.

It appears that the original stock of Cantelmo, who came from Provence with Charles of Anjou, claimed consanguinity with the kings of Scotland; and succeeded, under our Charles II. in obtaining from that monarch a recognition of the connexion, and his full sanction to bear the name.

In other respects the town offers nothing remarkable, except its cheerful situation, the pastoral transalpine character of its environs, the fine view of the valley which it commands, and

a singular low circular tower, without either door or window, standing at its western extremity, near another bridge over the Aterno. No one could give me any account of this fabric, except that it was *cosa antica*; nor could I obtain a more satisfactory explanation of the words "Resta, Resta," deeply engraven in large characters on a square stone inserted into the surface of the exterior wall, at about half its height from the ground.

I found a better inn at Popoli than any I had met with since my departure from the capital, that at Aquila excepted; and, among a number of well-dressed dishes, I had an opportunity of judging of the variety and excellence of the fish supplied by the streams above described, among which, nevertheless, its own Pescara holds the first rank.

On leaving Popoli for the shores of the sea, this stream is not recrossed; but the road branches off from the centre of the town, and immediately joins its banks, within a very short distance of which it runs for the rest of the day's journey. The barren and very steep ridge of rocks which rises on either side, leaving

barely space for the track and the Pescara, points out some violent convulsion of nature as the only means by which it could penetrate through so contracted a ravine.* This, however, widens by degrees, offering an agreeable landscape, with verdant meadows by the water-side, and a flourishing state of cultivation, divided into small compartments shaded by many fine trees. A small brook, running from a village called Bussi to the north, here mingles with the main stream.

About four miles farther, on a high cliff overhanging the road, stands the little town of Tocco, in a commanding and picturesque situation, with a carriage road to it, branching off up a steep hill. This place contains about three thousand inhabitants, and abounds with springs,

* The space occupied by the valley of Solmona was, according to some naturalists, a lake, the contents of which forced themselves, through the narrow defile here alluded to, into the wider plains that border the Adriatic. The rocks that border the pass are volcanic, and the gorge is moreover remarkable for a periodical current of air that alternates its direction every fifteen hours, from east to west, with great regularity, beginning below Tocco towards Popoli, and *vice versâ*. The pass bears the name of *Interpontia*.

which fertilize the elevated platform on which it rests, so as to copiously provide it with all the necessaries and even luxuries of life. The natives are considered industrious and enterprising, and the community in a flourishing condition.

After this, another stream, named Orta, throws itself into the Pescara, from a glen on the right. We crossed its wide stony bed, bearing all the marks of the devastations it commits in the winter, which render the assistance of a bridge, now in a state of construction, highly necessary. This brook, which has a bitter bituminous taste, rises in the mountains of Majella; and, after receiving another, called Ofente, it flows under the town of Caramanico in its way to the plain.

About a mile before this spot, not far removed from the opposite bank of the river, stand the ruins of a monastery, which, for extent of territory and jurisdiction, and consequently for affluence and power, ranked among the most distinguished of the many sanctuaries which existed in this portion of Italy.

It had been dedicated to the Holy Trinity,

but was more generally known by the name of San Clemente, having been founded for the express purpose of receiving the body of that pope, who was the fourth in succession from St. Peter himself.

The Emperor Louis II. obtained these venerated relics from Adrian II. in the year 866; and, having ordered them to be removed from Rome, assisted in person at the ceremony which illustrated their deposition in this spot. This was attended with all the pomp and solemnity that could render it impressive; and, if we are to believe the chronicles, was ennobled by no scanty accompaniment of miracles and prodigies.

The river Pescara, dividing in two branches, formed an island of considerable extent: the amenity of its position and the fertility of its soil appear to have struck the emperor as conferring upon it the most appropriate attributes for such an establishment. It was named Casa Aurea, which was soon corrupted to Casauria, an appellation which the convent and the whole of the surrounding possessions retained to a very late period. The physical changes occasion-

ed by earthquakes, and the operation of time have restored the course of the river to a single stream, and the island no longer exists; but the remains of the church, and of part of the monastery, are to be seen in their original position, preserving sufficient vestiges of grandeur to attest the magnificence of the original building; while a fine pulpit, or ambone, of sculptured marble,—a candelabrum of similar workmanship,—a basso-rilievo, on the exterior façade, representing the translation of the bones of St. Clement,—and the brazen gates, which, like those at Monte Cassino, are inscribed with the names of the possessions belonging to the community, are still in existence.

One of its monks, at the end of the twelfth century, wrote a detailed account of its institutions, and a subsequent chronicle of the events which particularly regarded it. This document, which was found in the Royal Library at Paris, has been considered of sufficient historical importance to have caused its publication successively by Duchesne, Ughelli, and finally Muratori, who, with that minute spirit of investigation which characterizes all his re-

searches, has enriched it with some valuable commentaries, and adorned it with the engraving of the above-mentioned bas relief, which, if it does not establish a very favourable idea of sculpture in the year 866, is not deficient in attraction to those who make the history of the dark and middle ages their peculiar study.

The names of all the personages represented in sculpture are engraved over their heads, and the speeches that issue from their mouths are expressed in poetical numbers: one of these records the locality as *Insula Piscariæ, paradisi floridus hortus.*

I never could obtain any satisfactory information as to the period of the suppression of this community; but am led to imagine, from collateral circumstances, that it occurred before the commencement of the seventeenth century, since which what remains of its original tenure is held in commendam.

On looking back from this plain to the mountain ranges which occupy the central portions of Abruzzo, their aspect undergoes a very material alteration. The whole line of the gloomy Morrone, forming the eastern flank

of the valley of Solmona, is visible, as far as its point of junction with the higher chain of Majella, the extremity of which runs in a diagonal line towards the sea-shore, assuming at the same time a much more distinct and isolated form. I could observe, on the other side of the river, the same appearance in the high ridge to the east of Aquila; while Monte Corno, though still towering in supereminent majesty above the rest, loses much of the peculiarity of shape which has given it the name it bears.

All this portion of the Apennines, the highest of their whole extent, gradually sinks, and finally subsides into a comparatively level space, which stretches for at least ten miles to the edge of the Adriatic; which tract, from the quality of its soil, and the milder temperature it enjoys, is suited to the various species of cultivation which distinguish the most fertile districts of Italy. This was already observable below the Orta, where the road after traversing an uncultivated portion of forest scenery, diversified by large blocks of grey rock, reaches a broader platform less favoured by picturesque details, but gifted with a much richer

cultivation. The fruit-trees of all sorts were loaded with their different produce in such luxuriant clusters, and of such considerable dimensions, as to speak most forcibly in favour of the change of climate; the effects of which were likewise visible in the advanced maturity which they exhibited. Soon after this, the river is crossed at a ferry, and the road carried, for no very ostensible motive, on its left bank for the space of three miles.*

Here we stopped to bait at a tavern, called, from its position, Mezza Scafa; from which spot a horse-road branches off to the small town of Alanno, three miles distant.

The next ferry, which replaces the traveller on the south side of the Pescara, is situated in the widest part of the plain, entirely cultivated with wheat, and affording but an uninteresting prospect, though the city of Chieti shows itself to considerable advantage on a high ridge to the right.

* The cause was a change in the original course of the river; this has now (1835) been restored to its ancient line, and embanked. The high-road is no longer carried across it, but keeps to the right shore all the way to Pescara,

On the left is seen the village of Rosciano, and beyond it several towns and habitations scattered over a tract of land, which, though not absolutely flat, presents at that distance too unvaried and colourless a surface to be grateful to the eye. The ferry-boats of the Pescara are remarkably well constructed, and afford every facility for entrance and exit which can be required, displaying, in these particulars, a very forcible contrast with the crazy and awkward vessels adapted to similar purposes in the vicinity of the capital, and in the southern provinces.

About eighteen miles from Popoli, and seven from Pescara, a stone pillar, erected at a break in the road to the right, indicates that it leads to Chieti: we passed it, keeping a straight direction towards the sea, through a clayey soil, which assumes a very peculiar character from being broken into numerous narrow and very deep ravines, rendering bridges of one arch a matter of frequent and absolute necessity. At the bottom of these, a turbid and scanty rill indolently works its way to the Pescara, which flows now in a broad, smooth, and

stately stream in a north-east direction towards the sea.

As we approached the shore, the temperature was much hotter, and we saw reapers employed at their work; while in the plain of Aquila, on the preceding day, the hay was barely fit for the scythe. The Adriatic, which we were fast approaching, and which might have relieved the dullness of the prospect, is not visible, in consequence of the extreme flatness of the intervening surface, till within a mile of the town of Pescara itself; but a low range of hills on the left of the river, running back from the shore, and covered with villas, woods, and cultivation, present an agreeable picture, as well as a contrast to the general view. Among them is situated a village called Castellamare, which, like its more celebrated namesake in the vicinity of Naples, is much frequented in the summer for the convenience of sea-bathing, and the benefit of a cool and healthy air.

Except the steeple of its church, no part of Pescara is visible from the exterior of the fortifications, which inclose it in a perfect

square, parallel to the river on one side, and to the sea on the other. These are as strong as the situation and the rules of art could make them in the time of Charles V, the date of their completion.

The river itself, or at least that part of it which adjoins the town, runs within the line of the outworks; and an inner gate opens from the quay to the inhabited part just facing the ferry, which crosses the Pescara, and unites the road from Popoli to that of the Roman frontier. As high as this point the stream is navigable, and affords safe anchorage to vessels of small tonnage; twenty of which, chiefly from the inferior harbours on the Adriatic coast, were moored near the quay. The mouth of the river is nearly a mile farther, and is marked by a small flat island, leaving only one side open as a channel, which, from its shallowness and tortuous shape, renders the navigation somewhat difficult.

Pescara would undoubtedly never have claimed the appellation of a town, were it not for its fortifications, and the addition of a garrison of about two hundred men to the four hundred

which form its population. These are distributed in small houses of mean but uniform construction, bordering wide and straight streets laid out on a regular plan, but bearing the most desolate aspect of poverty and depopulation. The air is considered so unhealthy, that this circumstance alone renders a residence at Pescara an object of terror to all military men.

I found a miserable inn, devoid of the slight necessaries which I had hitherto met with, even in places proverbial for such deficiencies. A general scarcity of vegetables, milk, and even fish, wine of the worst quality, and water barely drinkable, (the Pescara furnishing the only supply,) rendered half a day's sojourn in so dull and gloomy a spot a matter of considerable irksomeness; but the distance to Giulia Nuova, the nearest resting-place, was too great, added to the increased heat of the weather, to allow me to proceed farther.

The inmates of the inn, chiefly females, were however courteous and attentive; a disposition which shone through the languid listlessness which peculiarly marks the habits and manner

of all persons who have repeatedly suffered from malaria fevers, in the same degree as the faded remains of a brilliant complexion could still be traced through the clayey hue imparted by that disease. I had more than once previously remarked the regularity of feature, and cast of expression, which frequently distinguish the populations most exposed, from their local situation, to the ravages of this scourge; and this observation, renewed and corroborated at Pescara, added painfully to the melancholy impression which an intercourse, however transient, with the sufferers, is but too apt to produce.

In the days of the Roman republic this estuary was illustrated by the existence of a considerable town, which, from it, had been named Aternum, and entirely covered the site of the modern Pescara; with this difference, that it likewise extended to the opposite bank of the river, to which it was united by a bridge. It belonged to the Frentani, occupying the district to the south-east, and formed indeed their boundary with the neighbouring Vestini. Several tombs and vestiges of ancient build-

ings have been found in the immediate vicinity, and attest the identity of Aternum; which has likewise been proved by inscriptions, many of which are preserved and copied.

It retained its original appellation in the infancy of Christianity, when it was very early dignified with an episcopal see. Its present name was introduced by the Lombards in its original form of *Piscaria,* probably from its maritime situation; which ought to have secured to it at a more remote period the station which it seems to have attained much later, when, under a military point of view, as a stronghold and one of the keys of the kingdom, it attracted the notice of the government. It then became a fortress, and, as such, was frequently besieged and taken; but can scarcely be said to have gained any celebrity but that of giving its title to one of the most renowned generals of Charles V., Ferrante Francesio d'Avôlos, whose limited course of existence was crowned by every distinction belonging to military glory.

His widow, the celebrated Vittoria Colonna, derived, perhaps, as much renown from her

union with so famed a warrior, as from those virtues, talents, and powers, which called forth for nearly half a century the homage of every individual who advanced any pretensions to learning and genius. For many successive years all Italy re-echoed with the praise of her who could inspire the pen of Ariosto with these well-known lines:

> Sceglieronne una, e sceglerolla tale
> Che superato avrà l'invidia in modo
> Che nessun' altra potrà aver a male
> Se l'altre taccio, e se lei sola lodo.

The river itself had, more than a century before this, (in 1423,) acquired a mournful celebrity through the death of Muzio Attendolo, better known by the appellation of Sforza, which, though originally a nickname, descended to his children with the inheritance of his glories.

After having successfully forded the Pescara just below the spot where the present ferry exists, and where it appears that a bridge then stood, he attempted the same passage in order to rally the courage of his cavalry which had remained on the opposite bank; when having deviated from the line he had first followed,

to extend a helping hand to one of his pages who was in danger of being drowned, the hind-legs of his charger failed him, and, sinking in the soft and deeper bed of the river, the weight of his armour debarred him from even an effort to avert his fate.

Paulus Jovius, in his life of that warrior, gives an impressive account of this event, adding, that his iron-girt hand was seen twice above the billows, as they rolled the horse and rider towards the Adriatic, from whose depths neither were ever recovered.

From Pescara a tolerable carriage-road runs along the shore southwards to Francavilla and Ortona, both small sea-ports. The last, now an episcopal see, whose ancient name has suffered no change, was the principal port of the Frentani, and derived considerable importance from this circumstance, as well as from being the seat of various manufactures connected with the maritime profession, including ship-building. It still has a few insignificant remains of antiquity; but its port, through a succession of physical alterations, has lost all its advantages.

This place was comprised in the territorial possessions settled by Charles V. on his natural daughter Margaret, on her marriage with Alessandro di Medici, and afterwards carried by her into the Farnese family. She restored some temporary consequence to Ortona, by conferring upon it the title of capital of these states, and selecting it for her winter residence.

I was assured that in the summer, when the rivers are low and easily fordable, it is possible to proceed along the coast from Ortona as far as Il Vasto, the ancient Histonium. This was likewise a city of the Frentani, whose domains extended a considerable way along the seashore; and it was as much superior in population and magnitude to Ortona, as the present town of Il Vasto is to the modern representative of this last. This track would bring the traveller nearly to the confines of Abruzzo, divided by the river Trigno from the province of Molise or Campobasso.

My departure from Pescara was attended with indescribable feelings of relief and satisfaction. I quitted it by the ferry above mentioned, which at a very early morning hour was

crowded by groups of country folks of both sexes, bearing the animal and vegetable produce of their districts to Pescara itself, and the small towns which lie on the southern bank of the river; and which, from this circumstance, I judged to be less favoured by fertility of soil, or individual industry and labour.

The road is excellent and perfectly level, running for nearly three miles under a pleasant range of olive-clad hills, thickly studded with small villages, farm-houses, and villas in agreeable situations. Among these is placed Castellamare, which I have already mentioned, and another called S^ta^ Maria del Foco, enjoying an equally salubrious air.

The base of this ridge is well cultivated, principally as garden-ground, *orti*, watered by several inconsiderable springs which originate on the spot, and stagnate on the soil, from the physical impossibility of discharging themselves in the sea; which, though only a few hundred yards distant, is inaccessible from a sand-bank covered with pines, which likewise renders it invisible from the road that runs parallel with it.

The myrtle, cistus, and other plants that love the shore, grow abundantly in this region, denoting the influence of a much milder climate.

This is succeeded by another chain of hills, of a very different formation, being composed of a poor clay, crumbling as usual into fissures, and but imperfectly clothed with scanty vegetation. Beyond it, the group which forms the Gran Sasso assumes an interesting aspect as one travels along and round its roots.

In my subsequent journey to Solmona, I observed that the highest peak of the Gran Sasso, which alone is visible from that spot, appears quite isolated. From Aquila a second pinnacle is discernible, nearly equal to the first in elevation. Descried from the road to Chieti or Pescara, these two seem to touch each other; but, from the sea-shore, a considerable space extends between them, with intermediate points. Though, perhaps, the first-mentioned aspect is the most striking, this last view, being less remote, gives a more perfect insight to the precipitous and rugged recesses it contains, and exemplifies in a more forcible manner the austere character of its form.

The first river to be crossed after the Pescara is the Salino, retaining its ancient denomination: it is a narrow and turbid stream, flowing in a broad bed of clay, and, like most others of the same quality, rather diminishes in rapidity as it approaches the sea, which now becomes, and continues to be, visible from the road during the remainder of the day's journey, in consequence of the lowness of the intervening sand-bank.

The distance from the Salinus to the Aternus, or Pescara, coincides with that marked in the ancient itineraries between this last and a spot called *ad Salinos*, from a large establishment for the collecting and manufacturing of salt which existed there. Festus, indeed, seems to indicate that the celebrated Via Salaria derived its appellation from this circumstance: "Salaria Via est appellata, quia per eam Salini sal à mari deferebant."

The ancient city of Angulus, one of the four mentioned by Pliny as belonging to the Vestini, has been recognised (probably from some analogy in the names) in Cività Sant' Angelo, a little town of about four thousand inhabitants,

which we soon discovered to the left, on a small eminence some way inland; previous to this, another smaller, called Monte Silvano, had showed itself; and, beyond it, one still less considerable, named Silvi.

After crossing the little river Piomba—the ancient Matrinus, and another lesser stream, we could descry, about five miles inland, the city of Atri, situated on a commanding elevation, in a country little favoured by form or fertility.

Under the names of Hatria, Atria, or Adria, this town constituted the capital of the Adriani, occupying a subdivision of the district known by the appellation of Picenum.

Of its size and importance in ancient times some idea may be formed, not only from the remains which it still exhibits, and the circumstance of its having a port, or naval station, at the mouth of the river Piomba, now Matrinus; but likewise from the remoteness of its origin, as denoted by the curious coins found within its precincts, and in its immediate vicinity. The peculiarities of form and execution which stamp these relics, and their Etruscan legend, have ranked them as anterior to those of Todi,

Gubbio, and Veletri; and the native antiquaries have not hesitated, from these and other circumstances, to ascribe to this place the honour of having given its name to the sea that bathes its shores, affirming that the other Adria, beyond the Po, in the Venetian territory, was only a colony derived from this city.

I shall not venture to discuss so momentous a question, or decide which of these gave birth to the Emperor Hadrian; but limit my observations to the singular subterranean excavations which exist near Atri, forming a series of chambers, distributed with such regularity as to authorize the notion that they were designed for some particular object, such as prisons or magazines.

Their peculiarities have suggested the idea that they are of more remote construction than the Lathomiæ at Syracuse, which they much resemble, and the celebrated prisons of Servius Tullius at Rome; while some antiquaries have not hesitated to assert that the word *Atrium* may have originated from these excavations, originally invented by the natives of this city.

These, with some fragments of walls, remains of baths, and other public edifices, constitute the vestiges of antiquity which are to be noticed at Atri; to which may be added a number of well-preserved Latin inscriptions, one of which records the worship of Jupiter Doliænus, whose title was derived from a town in Dalmatia.

The modern city is an episcopal see, containing about four thousand inhabitants, and confers the dignity of Duke on the illustrious family of Acquaviva, who boast of having been the first in the rank of subjects to whom such a title was granted by King Ladislas, towards the end of the fourteenth century.

About twelve miles inland, in the same line as Atri, stands Cività di Penne, one of the principal towns of Abruzzo, and still more considerable in antiquity under the name of Pinna, belonging to the Vestini.

It retains some antique fragments, but of no great importance or interest. A diramation of the Via Salaria was conducted to it from Castrum Novum (now Giulia Nuova) near the sea, through Adria, and afterwards returned

back to the coast near the river Salinus, joining the main branch at the mouth of the river Aternus.

We stopped to bait at one of the few habitations that exist on the sea-shore. This, like all the rest, was constructed of mud mixed with straw, and hardened in the sun; but, notwithstanding the humbleness of its exterior appearance, we found it contained a good stable and kitchen, and a room cleaner and better furnished than many others we had met with in the large towns of Abruzzo. The little town of Montepagano is seen at a short distance inland from this spot.

After quitting this our resting-place, we had to cross, that is, to ford, four miles farther, the Vomano, which retains its ancient name, and is considered one of the most considerable, and by far the most formidable, among the rivers of these regions.

It rises in the higher valleys of Monte Corno, and receives, during a course of forty miles, many other streams and mountain torrents, which contribute during the rainy season, or the melting of the snows, to increase the ra-

vages which it commits, as well as the obstacles it opposes in the way of travellers.

This day's journey, as may be inferred from the above description, was somewhat tedious; as nothing could be more uninteresting than the general features of the country, or more monotonous than the sea-view from a flat and barren bank.

The aspect of the town of Giulia Nuova, rising on a considerable eminence at no great distance from the shore, and showing its towers and cupolas above a rich inclosure of trees and cultivation, proved a most agreeable relief to the eye; but, previous to reaching it, the line of our progress was changed by a sudden turn to the left, not along, but into the wide bed of the river Tordino, the only practicable road which, as we had been informed, could allow of our approach to Teramo.

This channel, widened to the extent of more than half a mile by the several small rills into which the river is subdivided, was the course we followed for more than two hours, over the rough pebbles which strew it in its whole extension. After this most trying progress,

we suddenly emerged from the bed of the torrent into an excellent road, which has been made thus far from Teramo, but is here obstructed by a deep ravine, over which no bridge has hitherto been erected. The rest of the way somewhat compensated what we had endured, as it ran through a pretty undulated country, well cultivated, and shaded by olives interspersed with oaks. The aspect of the Gran Sasso, which we were rapidly approaching, added greatly to the surrounding scenery: its details, and especially the highest peak, became more clearly defined, and developed themselves in a state of dignity, not the less impressive from the somewhat gloomy character they assume.

But some steep, though inconsiderable elevations, which inclose the town of Teramo, soon shut out this prospect as we approached it. The city is situated at the junction of the rivers Tordino and Vezzola, which unite at right angles just under the principal gate; giving it that peculiar position which obtained for it, like all others in similar situations, the appellation of Interamnium. We had to cross

the Vezzola, which, though at this time scarcely deserving the name of a stream, is subject to such very sudden augmentations, that we were told it is not uncommon for the inhabitants of Teramo to find themselves debarred from returning to their abodes, after an evening's walk, by a sudden fall of rain.

This river is called Albulates by Pliny, probably from the white hue which, running through a chalky soil, it assumes in its temporary increases, and which by Livy is recorded as a prodigy.

The exterior of Teramo, encircled by decayed walls and crumbling towers, is far from indicative of the capital of a province. A breach in the former, which served for entrance for a carriage during some temporary repairs to the principal gate and street, was in strict unison with this appearance. The interior, composed of narrow lanes and mean-looking houses, seemed quite deserted at the hour I entered, which was that devoted to rest after the noon-day heat. We found some difficulty in gaining admittance to one of the only two inns which it boasts of; but the accommoda-

tion, especially the culinary department, was above mediocrity.

The city of Teramo, containing from five to six thousand inhabitants, is not unfavourably situated on a kind of promontory, advancing towards the point of junction of the two above-mentioned streams, and covers two sides of the triangle which it forms. These, from the aspect of their wide stony beds and rugged banks, can scarcely be looked upon as conferring any picturesque additions to the prospect; and the hills, which close round it on every side, produce an unpleasant sensation of confinement on the mind as well as the eye.

There is but one broad and straight street; and, in that one, but few good houses: in some of the outskirts, however, some better edifices are to be seen, displaying in the style of their architecture, and its accompanying ornaments, a more refined degree of taste and workmanship than is usually observable in provincial towns.

I found the same superiority of execution in the interior of most of the edifices, especially in the department of fresco-painting.

The town boasts of but few manufactures, or establishments of industry; but, as the capital of the first province of Abruzzo Ultra, it contains the civil and criminal tribunals, and is the residence of several families of considerable landed property.

Notwithstanding these advantages, the population wears the appearance of poverty and idleness, but their manners are singularly courteous and conciliating; and the higher classes, in dress, demeanour, and discourse, evince a general superiority over the other provinces.

The cathedral has been so repaired and modernized, that except in its portal, which retains a Gothic scroll, it has lost the venerable character of antiquity which the date of its foundation might claim for it; for it is considered as the earliest of all the Christian dioceses in this part of the kingdom, and its head, on that account, is dignified with the title of Bishop of the *Abruzzi*. One of its pastors, Antonio Campano, who died in 1474, is said to have derived his name from the circumstance of his birth having taken place under a bay-tree between Calvi and Capua. He was

noticed and educated by a priest, and his uncommon quickness and subsequent acquirements obtained for him a rapid and successful advance in the ecclesiastical career. As an author he likewise obtained no mean celebrity; especially by the lives of the two noted condottieri,—Picinino, and Braccio di Montone: he has also left a long and elaborately penned epistle, entirely filled with laudatory descriptions of the city of Teramo and its environs, which proves that he was either singularly impressed with, or grossly exaggerated, the natural advantages of his episcopal residence. This work—for its length deserves that name—is, however, not deficient in entertainment, and exemplifies the familiar and even facetious style which characterized a bishop's pen in the fifteenth century.

The surrounding country, broken into hillocks of a precipitous form but no considerable elevation, is in general fertile, producing in abundance corn, wine, and oil of a good quality.

Its position, on the southern side of the Gran Sasso, may account, notwithstanding its proxi-

mity to this highest of the Apennines, for the mildness of the climate: the snow scarcely ever lies on the ground; the caper-plant grows wild; but the orange-trees, of which a few are planted in private gardens, require to be covered up in the winter. The hills that thus surround Teramo on every side, are supposed to be detrimental to a free ventilation, and the air is, in consequence, not considered healthy at all times of the year. They likewise effectually shut out all view of Monte Corno from the town; but a slight ascent of few minutes' duration, up any of their banks, immediately replaces it within the scope of vision.

This city has been so accurately demonstrated to have been the Interamnium Prætutium, that no argument is requisite to corroborate the fact.

Its name was due to its position between two rivers, and was common to others in similar situations,—such as, Interamnia Lirinas, on the Liris, Interamnia Nar, (now Terni,) and Interamnia Tiferna, the present Termoli; and its adjunct denoted its rank as the principal town of the Prætutian tribe or nation.

The district which they occupied appears to have abounded in wine during the Roman æra; and this article, which formed a staple commodity of the country, was collected for exportation at the mouths of the several rivers that divide these regions.

When the Lombards succeeded to the Goths in the invasion and successful occupation of Italy, the name of the city was changed, or corrupted, from Prætutium to Aprutium, and it is, as such, first mentioned by St. Gregory the Great. Its episcopal church retained, however, its distinctive appellation of Interamnium, which, later, became Teramum; and early in the twelfth century the town itself resumed its original name under the slightly altered form of Teramo, while the division of country to which it appertained continued to be called Aprutium, which title gradually extended to the whole of the surrounding district.

Some remains of antiquity are still extant, which point out the identity of its site, and the rank it held in the country. Among these may be noted two fine arches, of immense blocks, belonging to the amphitheatre, the re-

mainder of which is buried under a portion of the modern town; these relics being in the interior court of a small house, to which the access is by no means easy.

There are also to be seen the faint vestiges of a theatre, baths, and other edifices; while the quantity of busts, sculptural fragments, and inscriptions, which have been found, is numberless.

The day I passed at Teramo proved more than sufficiently long to see everything it contains that is worthy of observation; but by no means equally adequate to the enjoyment and advantages to be derived from the conversation of the Cavaliere D. Melchior Delfico, justly esteemed the Nestor of Neapolitan literature, who has for many years past made this city his residence. This distinguished author of many works on history, antiquity, and a variety of interesting subjects, unites to a very widely extended store of instruction, a most accurate and profound knowledge of every topic relating to his own country; and possesses, at a very advanced period of life, the still rarer merit of communicating the mental

treasures he has acquired with an amenity of manner, and a facility and simplicity of expression, which render them doubly valuable to those on whom they are bestowed.

The nephew of this gentleman undertook, in the year 1794, an excursion to the summit of Monte Corno, or the Gran Sasso, of which he has published a narrative, containing the only accurate and detailed description of these regions which exists. This undertaking, without presenting the sublime difficulties which attend the ascent of the more elevated regions of the Alps, so forcibly illustrated in a recent publication, or offering to the naturalist the local interest attached to the Sicilian volcano, offers nevertheless considerable obstacles not without a share of peril.

This production, written in a clear and unpresuming style, gives a very satisfactory, though not minute account of all that can arrest the attention of a philosopher; and fixes the height of the mountain, which was thereby accurately ascertained, at 9577 Parisian feet, that is, 459 less than Etna.

It is needless to add, that the pinnacle is

clothed in eternal snows; which, however, are of sufficient consistency and smoothness to rather facilitate than obstruct the progress of the observer; the more dangerous parts being entirely confined to such steep and broken portions of the mountain where the bare rock is scantily covered with loose shingles, which render the footing insecure in spots where the least slip or false step would be fatal.

The chamois are found so frequently as to become an object of sport to the inhabitants of the highest villages; and this is probably the only spot among the Apennines where this animal exists.

At the foot of this giant of the mountains, an Alpine district, situated in an eastern direction towards the Adriatic, and composed of several villages, has been known ever since the seventh century by the name of Valle Siciliana.

Pope Leo II. was born within its territory; and the period of his election is that which records the first mention of the spot, in the year 682.

Some of the native antiquaries have with

much eagerness attempted to derive its appellation from the ancient Siculi, whom they assert to have been its first inhabitants; while others ascribe it to the quantity of fern, *selce*, which abounds in this region, and caused it to be named Valle Seliciana, of which its usual denomination is a corruption. It continued for many centuries in the possession of a family which, having fixed their residence at a spot called Paleara, now Pagliara, assumed that name. The last scion of this stock was an only daughter, who, in 1276, carried the inheritance of this property into the house of Orsini, one of whom she had married.

These turbulent feudatories retained it for three centuries, during which space of time its importance, both as to locality and extent, placed it foremost among those fiefs the possession of which conferred sufficient power on their owners to render them generally troublesome, and sometimes formidable, to their sovereign.

The Orsini having forfeited it through the crime of rebellion, it was conferred by Charles V, in 1526, on Ferrante d'Alarçon de Mendoza,

with the title of marquisate; whose descendants possess a great portion of it to this day.

The villages that compose the district are, like those of Cicolano, numerous but small; and one of them, called Castelli, acquired considerable renown during a considerable space of time, for a manufactory of earthenware, which not only supplied the domestic uses of the whole province of Abruzzo, but was gradually carried to a scale of excellence which nearly placed it on a level with that fabricated at Faenza, from which all subsequent imitations of the same material have been named. The art is now lost; but the specimens preserved in the cabinets of the curious, exhibit, in the paintings that adorn them, a correctness of design and vivacity of colour which may bear comparison with the finest porcelain.

Another very small village, called Senarica, placed on the left shore of the Vomano, though not within the district of the Valle Siciliana, has boasted for centuries of the name, if not the dignity, of republic; and the causes that have led to the tacit confirmation of this singular distinction, are perhaps worth recording.

It appears that, in the year 1610, the Spanish viceroy of Naples, Count Benevente, granted to ten persons, who divided between them as patrimonial inheritance the possession of the whole village and its territory, a diploma of investiture, recognising in these individuals the right of immediate and feudal jurisdiction over a property, the tenure of which was instituted, and had existed for many centuries, according to the form of the Lombard laws and customs, *jure Langobardorum*. Similar investitures had been permitted to continue in an unaltered shape in various other parts of the kingdom; but this was the only example of the entire population of a single village having an united claim to it.

Each separate member was therefore admitted to the enjoyment of the rights and privileges which the baron or feudal lord only exerted in other less favoured spots, and which were, moreover, secured by the same solemn grant to their descendants in perpetuity. These having greatly multiplied since the above-mentioned period, Senarica displayed the solitary example of a community entirely com-

posed of nobles, who were exempt from feudal service and royal imposts, and possessed the exclusive right of selecting from among their own numbers the governor, judge, and other principal local dignitaries, without reference to, or interference from, any superior authority in the kingdom.

The name of republic, which was rather conferred by the neighbouring municipalities, than assumed by this privileged association, may not seem quite compatible with the nature of an institution the origin of which was entirely feudal, and the continuance of which depended on the whim or caprice of a despotic government; but it, nevertheless, obtained a sort of stability, and its members willingly adopted it, conferring on their chief magistrate the title of Doge. The overthrow of all the feudal institutions in the last century put an end to this distinction; but Senarica still preserves with great care, and no small portion of pride and satisfaction, the parchment on which is recorded the boast of having been (no disparagement to San Marino) the smallest republic in Europe.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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